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Analysis and expressive performance: four selected works by Chopin

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ANALYSIS AND EXPRESSIVE PERFORMANCE:
FOUR SELECTED WORKS BY CHOPIN

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

in

The School of Music

by

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ABSTRACT

In this dissertation, I examine four works by Chopin and address issues of expressive performance derived from principles of the nineteenth-century Swiss theorist, Mathis Lussy (1828-1910). Lussy’s systematic approach into the understanding and organization of the individual phrase in relation with performance practice resembles many recent theories of rhythm and performance methodologies. As have several recent theorists, Lussy sought the causes of expressive performance in the structure of the musical phrase, rather than a performer’s artistic intuition, and identified a tripartite classification of accent.

The purpose of this study is to adapt and expand the application of Lussy’s theory of accent, rhythm, and expression as a basis for performance as it relates to a discussion and analysis of the four selected works by Chopin in conjunction with critical appraisal of recent literature. Topics of discussion include metrical and hypermetrical analyses, grouping structure issues, questions of initial and terminal articulations, expressive accents, and variations of tempo and dynamics as they relate to expressive performance.

Each of the works that I have chosen traces a different form, and this allows comparison among different arrangements of phrase and periodic structures. My performative and analytic recommendations and suggestions are compared and contrasted with other published analyses—by Edward T. Cone, Harald Krebs, John Rink, and William Rothstein, among others. The analyses include selected passages from the Prelude, Op. 28, No. 7 in A major; the Mazurka, Op. 7, No. 2 in A minor; the Prelude Op. 28, No. 17 in A♭ major; and the Etude Op. 10, No. 3 in E major. Using Lussy’s precepts, along with additional commentary, I formulate alternative ways to perform and to connect short segments and ways to shape their successions into convincing larger and expressive designs.
INTRODUCTION

Every valid interpretation . . . represents, not an approximation of some ideal, but a choice: which of the relationships implicit in this piece are to be emphasized, to be made explicit?

Edward T. Cone¹

Edward T. Cone was one of the first musicians to discuss and write about analytical issues that directly address the performer. In his acclaimed work, *Musical Form and Musical Performance*, Cone argues that what separates music from other art forms is that it is not fixed and immutable, like a painting, a sculpture, or an architectural edifice. For Cone, the “timing arts,” which include drama, literature, and music, are “subject to readings, performances, and interpretations . . .” that are to be “discovered and, so far as possible, exposed.”² Cone claims that what makes a performance interesting and engaging, is not the music in of itself, but how a performer interprets the music. For Cone, an interpretation of music will always involve choices—choices that depend on analysis of both large-scale events, like formal relationships of a composition and deeper-level structures, and local events, like the shaping and articulations of phrases, rhythms, and sections. Wallace Berry affirmed this opinion when he said “musical interpretation must be informed by penetrating analysis.”³ Likewise, Eugene Narmour echoed a similar sentiment claiming, “performers can never plumb the aesthetic depth of a great work without an intense scrutiny of its parametric elements.”⁴

¹ Cone (1968, 34).
² Ibid (32-3).
³ Berry (1986, 415).
In an article from 1985, Janet Schmalfeldt examines the value and limitations of analysis for performance by creating a dialogue between two different personalities—a Performer and an Analyst who each discuss and consider how their own interpretations of two Beethoven Bagatelles might influence one another. Ultimately, Schmalfeldt’s Analyst concludes, “there is no single, one-and-only performance decision that can be dictated by an analytic observation.”

But like Cone, Berry, and Narmour, Schmalfeldt acknowledges that a performer’s interpretation will always be subject to choices—choices that are first and foremost influenced by analysis. The act of performing, therefore, is rooted in the performer’s decisions about what is important to convey in each passing moment, as Cone suggests. While many performers claim that they do not partake in the act of analysis, John Rink notes otherwise, stating, “Performers are continually engaged in a process of ‘analysis,’ only of a different kind from that employed in published analyses. This sort of ‘analysis’ is not some independent procedure applied to the act of interpretation, but rather an integral part of the performing process.”

Such a notion of analysis being an integral part of the performance process is an idea shared by Leonard Meyer. In his classic book, Explaining Music, he states, “The performance of a piece of music is . . . the actualization of an analytic act—even though such analysis may have been intuitive and unsystematic. For what a performer does is to make the relationships and patterns potential in the composer’s score clear to the mind and ear of the experienced listener.”

In a recent article from 2012, Mime Doğantan discusses a nineteenth-century view of the performing process. She argues that the concept and practice of musical phrasing was considered

5 Schmalfeldt (1985, 28).


7 Meyer (1973, 29).
to be the fundamental means for achieving expression in an artistic musical performance—a notion that remains widespread today. According to Doğantan, nineteenth-century music theorists contended that an expressive performance depends upon a performer’s choice—specifically, decisions regarding surface level details, such as phrasing. She explains,

As a concept, phrasing evolved to refer to the shaping of the musical phrase and its subunits in accordance with their internal dynamic structures in a goal-oriented manner so as to make it simultaneously intelligible and expressive: a clear and expressive delivery of the music could be achieved through the same means, namely phrasing. Today this concept continues to be the very basis of performance pedagogy. Even though performance styles have changed rather dramatically between the early nineteenth- and early twenty-first centuries, conceptually the practice of performance still relies on the unity of the means for achieving clarity and expression: we take it for granted that when the performer is able make the structure or form of a musical phrase intelligible, he simultaneously renders it expressive.8

Prior to the nineteenth century, theorists sometimes opined that “certain subtleties of expression cannot really be described; they must be heard.”9 In the nineteenth century, however, theorists began to write about the term “expression” as a means to describe the essence of the performing process, depicting it as the “highest interpretative artistry.”10 As Romanticism embraced musical expression, theorists formulated rules, principles, and various doctrines to classify and evaluate musical expression. They too understood that the act of performing was synonymous with the act of interpretation. That is, the expressive prerogatives, which are an essential component of the performing process, require performers to make choices—whether conscious or unconscious—concerning the detailed functions of specific musical features and the means of projecting them.

8 Doğantan (2012, 15).
Among the first to articulate such a doctrine of expressive performance was the nineteenth-century Swiss theorist, Mathis Lussy (1828-1910). Lussy’s theory that the foundation of expressive performance can be identified in metric, rhythmic, and tonal disruptions has distinct modern associations. While his theory has been criticized for its overgeneralization of performance instructions and for its occasional inconsistencies, nonetheless, it can effectively focus our attention on crucial issues of expression—especially when read beside more recent theories.

In this dissertation, I examine four works by Chopin and address issues of expressive performance derived from principles of Lussy’s theory. Each of the works that I have chosen for this study traces a different form, and this allows comparison among different arrangements of phrase and periodic structures. My performative and analytic recommendations and suggestions will be compared and contrasted with other published analyses. The analyses include selected passages from the Prelude, Op. 28, No. 7 in A major (Cone, 1968); the Mazurka, Op. 7, No. 2 in A minor (Beach, 2012); the Prelude Op. 28, No. 17 in A♭ major (Rothstein, 2005); and the Etude Op. 10, No. 3 in E major (Rink, 2004, Rothstein, 1989 and Temperley, 2008). Using Lussy’s precepts, along with additional commentary by theorists including Fred Lerdahl and Ray Jackendoff, Joel Lester, John Rink, and Heinrich Schenker, I formulate alternative ways to perform and to connect short segments and ways to shape their successions into convincing larger and expressive designs.
CHAPTER ONE
MATHIS LUSSY’S DOCTRINE

Lussy’s Theory of Musical Expression

The Swiss pianist and theorist Mathis Lussy (1828-1910) lived and worked for most of his life in Paris, where he was warmly received as a prominent pedagogue for nearly forty years. Near the end of his life, Lussy received France’s highest decoration, Chevalier of the Légion d’honneur for his many contributions to music theory and aesthetics. Today, particularly in the United States, he is hardly remembered amongst scholars. However, because his tripartite classification of accent is reflected in more recent theoretical works—by authors like Sessions, Lerdahl and Jackendoff, and Kramer—Lussy has undeniably become “a pivotal figure in the transmission of a concept of accent in music.” His most important book, Traité de l’expression musicale: Accents, Nuances et Mouvements was published in 1874 and translated into English in 1885. This major theoretical work was met with widespread and immediate approval. The dedicatee, Belgian composer François-Auguste Gevaert, endorsed it so favorably that he implemented it for use in the Conservatoire Royal de Bruxelles of which he was director. Likewise, both Hugo Riemann and Hans von Bülow regarded it very highly, and Émile Jaques-Dalcroze acknowledged that it deeply influenced his own ideas concerning rhythms and musical expression.

13 Lussy (1874).
14 Smither (1960, 80).
In this work, Lussy posits a theory of musical expression. He argues that expression is a consequence of specific accentuation and articulations derived directly from rhythm. For Lussy, musical expression is not generated by arbitrary impulse, but rather is embedded in the structure and features of the composition, in lieu of the personality of the performer. Lussy explains:

The object of this work is to demonstrate the hitherto unknown reason which guides artists and professors in their accentuation, and to furnish a system of rules by which a player will be enabled to annotate and perform with expression every kind of vocal and instrumental music . . . These rules claim neither originality nor novelty, for the greatest masters have observed them unconsciously from time immemorial, and artists and people of taste have always submitted to them instinctively. The task of the present writer has therefore been merely to discover, classify, and formulate them. By this discovery, and in spite of all the imperfections of carrying it out, . . . musical expression leaves the exclusive domain of sentiment and enters that of reason.\(^{16}\)

After receiving the position of Professor of Piano at one of the largest schools in Paris, “directed by the sisters of the \textit{Congrégation de la Mère de Dieu},”\(^ {17}\) Lussy spent the next twenty years of his life analyzing the performances of the most virtuosic musicians of his time, and studying the works of such composers as Beethoven and Mozart as edited by Moscheles, Marmontel, Le Couppey, and others. From this research he concluded,

\begin{quote}
By this patient observation and minute study I have convinced myself that in identical situations—that is to say, in similar passages—artists make use of identical expression, with only such differences as result from the greater or less[er] degree of delicacy of their sentiment and technical skills.\(^ {18}\)
\end{quote}

It is from this belief that Lussy draws the following conclusions that are fundamental to his theory:

\(^{16}\) Lussy (1885, iv).
\(^{17}\) Ibid. (1).
\(^{18}\) Ibid. (1-2).
1. They [the performers] have all received the same impressions in different degrees from the same source; for similar effects are of course produced by similar causes.

2. As these expressions vary according to the different musical phrases, and not according to the individuals who produce them, it is clear that the cause of the expression resides and must be sought in the notes and the structure of the musical phrase.

3. The great artists do not feel at liberty to accept or to repudiate the sensation which they receive. Their unanimity of expression proves that they are . . . forced to give it utterance, not, perhaps, conscious of the force which impels them, but unable to resist it.\(^1\)

To assist performers, Lussy codified a system of expression involving the following steps:

1. Identifying the notes and passages which most excite and impress the performer.

2. Classifying each of those notes and/or passages.

3. Formulating laws that correspond to specific performative actions.\(^2\)

Since these apprehensible laws, according to Lussy, are logically supported, performances of the same piece will not differ significantly. To support this theory of musical expression, Lussy states:

Anyone who has mastered these rules may take a piece of vocal or instrumental music without a single mark of expression; and after noting the general structure of the phrases, the melodic and rhythmic design, the irregularities in the intervals, the chromatic notes, long notes, repeated notes, auxiliary notes . . . will then be able to point out the exact points which every artist would naturally emphasize, where he would quicken or slacken the tempo, and so on.\(^3\)

Heinrich Schenker (1868-1935) conveyed a similar view in the twentieth century in the preface to his edition of *Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony*, in which he states:

\(^{19}\) Lussy (1885, 2).

\(^{20}\) Ibid. (3).

\(^{21}\) Ibid. (4).
If, for example, the Ninth Symphony had come down to us—like most of the works of Sebastian Bach—without express dynamic symbols, an expert hand could nonetheless only place those symbols—according to the content—exactly as Beethoven himself had done.\textsuperscript{22}

In his \textit{Entwurf einer Lehre vom Vortrag}, Schenker articulates an analogous view concerning his general philosophy of performance: “Performance directions are fundamentally superfluous, since the composition itself expresses everything that is necessary.”\textsuperscript{23} Similarly, American pedagogue Alfred John Goodrich (1848-1920), another contemporary of Lussy, also understood that “there are many compositions in which necessary punctuating marks are not indicated . . . [and which] we must supply.”\textsuperscript{24} Hence, Lussy, along with other prominent musicians of his time, maintains that although composers may not always include adequate performance instructions in their scores, skilled performers can discover what is needed to render the works effectively. For Lussy, differences in performance interpretations result from the degree to which individual performers are instinctively perceptive of and familiar with certain laws of musical expression. Ultimately, a performer’s liberty of interpretation must submit to the “limits imposed by the laws of expression.”\textsuperscript{25} Lussy recognizes that great artists know these limits instinctively while many others remain unfamiliar with them. Still, Lussy maintains that “such aptitude . . . [for these laws] is nothing peculiar or individual . . . [it] only requires practice.”\textsuperscript{26}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{22} Quoted in Rothstein (1984, 5).
\item \textsuperscript{23} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{24} Goodrich (1899, 39).
\item \textsuperscript{25} Lussy (1885, 4).
\item \textsuperscript{26} Ibid. (12).
\end{itemize}
The principal tenet of Lussy’s theory is that music involves three vital components—tonality, meter, and rhythm. Lussy implies that musical experience has habituated us to anticipate and favor tonal attraction as well as regularity and symmetry. For Lussy, when a clear pattern is established the listener expects it to continue in the same manner. However, whenever established patterns in any of these realms “are threatened, then the mind responds emotively, causing the performer to react expressively.”\(^{27}\) In his *Traité*, Lussy clarifies,

Now it is precisely these unexpected, irregular, exceptional notes, and as it were, illogical notes which more especially have the faculty of impressing the feelings. They are the notes that engender expression, because they are the elements of stimulus, movement, force, fire, and contrast. The musical sentiment, being accustomed to expect affinity, regularity, and symmetry, is startled and disturbed by these unexpected and foreign notes.\(^{28}\)

In the twentieth century, Leonard Meyer articulated a strikingly similar theory in his *Emotion and Meaning in Music*, in which he stated: “affect or emotion—felt is aroused when an expectation—a tendency to respond—activated by the musical stimulus situation, is temporarily inhibited or permanently blocked.”\(^{29}\)

For Lussy, whenever these “unexpected and foreign notes” appear, the listener is startled because the established structure is disturbed. To justify these disruptions, a performer must treat them with special care to aid the listener in recognizing and accepting these irregularities. The more sensitive a performer is to the notes and rhythms that disorder an established structure, Lussy believes, the more expressive his or her playing. Accordingly, he defines musical expression as such: “Musical expression is the manifestation of the impressions produced on the

\(^{27}\) Green (1994, 197).

\(^{28}\) Lussy (1885, 8-9).

\(^{29}\) Meyer (1956, 31).
sentiments by those irregular notes which are destructive of key, mode, metre, and rhythm, and a revelation of the struggles and disturbances of our musical instinct.” To aid students in developing sensibility and skill in matters of musical expression, Lussy codified an intricate system of rules that articulate a classification of accents and systematize an underlying phrase structure of music.

**Lussy’s System of Rhythmic Structure**

Perhaps the most crucial contribution of Lussy’s theory deals with rhythmic structure (what we today understand as phrase structure). He begins with what he refers to as the largest structural unit—the *période*. Lussy defines it as a “succession of rhythmical phrases, concluding with a sound which gives the ear a feeling of complete and final rest.” Lussy then divides the *période* into smaller subdivisions of phrases: *hemistich* (antecedent or consequent phrase), *rythme* (subphrase), and *incise* (a motive or fragment of a phrase consisting of one or more notes). Lussy claims that there are two differences between the levels of an *incise* and a *rythme*. First, an *incise* is perceived as a fragment normally involving one or several notes, and second, the end of an *incise* is characterized by an interruption, not by repose. Mine Doğantan explains,

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30 Lussy (1885, 10).

31 Ibid. (52).

32 In the English translation of *Traité (Musical Expression)*, M.E. von Glehn translated *incise* as “section.” I decided, to avoid ambiguity, to use Lussy’s French terminology when referring to his concepts of phraseology and articulations throughout this study. “Section” and “Incise” both etymologically relate to the notion of cutting or slicing.

“an incise is an incomplete, inclusive sense-unit of the musical syntax . . . [while] the [rythme] . . . identifies a moment of melodic and/or harmonic arrival or repose.”

Recognizing group boundaries at the level of the incise and the rythme, according to Lussy, involves four criteria: length, rest, parallelism, and pitch proximity. Lussy explains, music, the elements of which, among all the arts, are the most fugitive, least stable, requires not only reposes, but also repetitions, of the same passages, of the same elements, so that the ear and the mind can grasp the idea and the feeling hidden behind the notes of each phrase, each strophe. The principle of musical phraseology resides precisely in this necessity.

Lussy describes examples of incises as consisting of:

1. A short figure . . . repeated several times.
2. A long note followed by a short one and repeated several times.
3. A short note followed by a long one and repeated several times.

In each excerpt of Example 1.1, Lussy indicates the grouping boundaries of the incises with a slur followed by a comma. There is no explanation, however, for why Lussy groups the last six beats of Example 1.1(a) as one unit. Doğantan believes that Lussy does so because the parallelism of the first two incises is discontinued in the third one. She explains, “Instead of hearing a boundary between E and C in the third measure, which would be effected by the non-proximity of the pitches, the ear chooses to pick out the ‘difference’ of the group from the two previous ones.” In Traité, Lussy does in fact say that “each group, distinguished by its difference from or resemblance to the preceding or the following [group] evidently forms a unit,

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34 Doğantan (2002, 81).
35 Quoted in Doğantan (1997, 102).
36 Lussy (1885, 72-3).
37 Doğantan (1997, 103).
Example 1.1: Lussy’s examples of *incises*[^38]

[^38]: Lussy (1885, 72-3).

a [rythme or] an incise, depending on its length. Erwin Ratz, and other more recent authors, would probably recognize this example as a sentence consisting of 1+1+2 bars[^40]. Lussy, however, does not explicitly acknowledge this frequently encountered design.

Example 1.2 reproduces Lussy’s segmentation of the beginning of Mozart’s Piano Sonata, K. 331, first movement, in A major[^41]. According to Lussy, mm. 1 and 2 represent

[^39]: Quoted in Doğantan (1997, 103).

[^40]: Caplin (1998, 9).

[^41]: Lussy (1885, 68).
incises, since they consist of short motives that are identical in contour and durational values.

Measures 3-4, on the other hand, are grouped as a longer cadential subunit. He explains,

The first and the second bar are exactly the same in design, and, therefore, each is an [incise]. The fourth differs a little from the third. These two bars in conjunct movement, by their ascending and descending structure, form a whole which may be called a [half cadence]. The fifth bar is exactly the same as the first; the sixth as the second; the seventh and eighth retain the same notes as the third and fourth with a slight change; the notes ascend from the tonic to the [supertonic chord] by consecutive movement, then descend to the tonic, and thus form an actual [authentic cadence] and the whole should be phrased thus.\(^{42}\)

Example 1.2: Lussy’s analysis of incises, rythmes, hemistiches, période indicated with annotated punctuation marks: Mozart, Piano Sonata in A major K. 331, Andante grazioso, mm. 1-8

In Lussy’s analysis, he uses linguistic structures to articulate rhythmic groups, an analogy that “continues the eighteenth-century tradition.”\(^{43}\) For instance, the punctuation marks above the

\(^{42}\) Lussy (1885, 68).

\(^{43}\) Doğantan (1997, 87).
score (the comma, the semicolon, and the period) represent various degrees of repose, closure, or even incomplete ideas. From the punctuation, we can conclude that Lussy refers to mm. 1, 2, 5, 6, as 1-bar *incises*; mm. 3-4 and mm. 7-8 as 2-bar *rythmes*; mm. 1-4 and mm. 5-8 as 4-bar *hemistiches*; and finally the entire antecedent-consequent phrase, mm. 1-8, as a *période*.

The *ictus* is an additional term which Lussy identifies as “the name given to the first and to the last accented beat of a [*rythme*] of which they form points of support.”44 For Lussy, “the *ictûs* are accents of weight that mark the points of melodic and/or harmonic stability.”45 Lussy explains, “[*rythmes*] have two *ictûs*, an *initial ictus* and a *final ictus*. These are the strong sounds, the pillars of the [*rythmes*]. They should always fall on a *thésis*, i.e. on the first or downbeat of a bar.”46 In her dissertation, Doğantan describes Lussy’s *ictûs* as rhythmic events marked by certain melodic or tonal events. She states that the “initial ictus . . . marks a melodic and/or harmonic initiation; the final ictus corresponds to a melodic and/or harmonic arrival.” Doğantan clarifies, however, “not all [*rythmes*] have both the initial and the final ictûs.”47 Lussy illustrates these points in his treatise *L’Anacrouse dans la musique moderne* (1903) with his analysis of *La Marseillaise*, as reproduced in Example 1.3.48 Note that the ictûs always fall on a downbeat regardless of where the phrase actually ends. Lussy’s feminine and masculine labels corroborate this distinction. Lussy describes *masculine* endings as rhythmic groups that end on the downbeat while *feminine* endings “are those in which the final sound falls on a weak beat or

44 Lussy (1908, ix).


46 Lussy (1908, 9).


48 Lussy (1903, 2).
on a weak part of the first beat.” For Lussy, the last note or chord of a phrase that involves a feminine ending is commonly unaccented, as illustrated in Example 1.4.

Example 1.3: Lussy’s analysis of La Marseillaise, mm. 1-4

Example 1.4: Feminine ending, Chopin Mazurka, Op. 7 No. 2 in A minor, mm. 1-4

In Lussy’s theory, he implies a perceptual distinction between the initial and final ictus. Doğantan describes this idea as follows:

The concept of the “principal ictus” distinguishes the listener’s experience of “motion-towards” and “motion-away-from” as a rhythmic unit unfolds. If the principal ictus is the initial one, the group moves away from it; if the final ictus is the principal one, the group moves towards it. When the group has a single ictus the context for identifying a principal ictus does not arise: the group as such moves towards or away from its only ictus.  

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49 Lussy (1908, 27).

When the initial ictus of a rhythmic grouping is absent and instead contains a rest on the downbeat, Lussy referred to it as a décapité (headless) group. An excerpt that Lussy used to illustrate this type of grouping is reproduced in Example 1.5. Although the bass is notated on the downbeat, Lussy argues that the decisive factor for labeling it as a décapité group involves the notation of the melody.

Example 1.5: Décapité group, Chopin Nocturne, Op. 48, No. 1, mm. 1-4

Tempo variation in performance, Lussy believes, is significantly influenced by the structural nature of rhythmic groups. For instance, thesíc rythmes, i.e. those that begin on a downbeat, normally create more stable and consistent timing profiles than anacrustic groups would produce. The reason is that anacrustic rythmes have unstable beginnings that strive towards the final ictus, and they are frequently vulnerable to tempo fluctuations.\footnote{Lussy (1885, 165-66).} Thesic rythmes, by contrast, will generally involve motion from an initial ictus, and do not usually call for variation of the tempo. By identifying and classifying incises and rythmes, Lussy’s phrase taxonomy can serve as a valuable guide for the performer, especially when considering tempo and dynamic fluctuations.
Lussy was particularly interested in the manner in which rhythmic units begin and end. For Lussy, final ictus articulate points of repose. An initial ictus, by contrast, initiates motion, propelling the music forward. In *Le rythme musical*, Lussy summarized three basic types of anacrusis: anacrouses intégrantes, anacrouses accessoires, and anacrouses motrices. The first two types of anacrusis generate varying degrees of structural integration. In Example 1.6(a), for instance, elimination of the anacrouses intégrantes would eradicate the essential character of the rhythm. In Example 1.6(b), however, the anacrouses accessoires (the sixteenth notes at the end

a. Anacrouses intégrantes, Beethoven, Piano Sonata, Op. 31, No. 2, Allegretto, mm. 1-4

Example 1.6: Anacrouses intégrantes and anacrouses accessoires

b. Anacrouses accessoires, Beethoven, Piano Sonata, Op. 2, No. 3, Adagio, mm. 1-4

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52 Lussy (1908, 20).

53 Ibid.
of mm. 2 and 3) could be omitted without altering the basic character of the rhythmic unit. Lussy explains,

*anacrouses intégrantes* . . . form an integral part of rhythms, the very essence and character of which would be completely destroyed by their removal . . . [while the] *anacrouses accessoires* . . . may be removed without in any way affecting either the completeness of sense or the expressive significance of the rhythm.\(^{54}\)

Unlike the other two categories, Lussy discusses the *anacrouses motrices* in the context of implied motion and not formal classification. That is, they do not “affect the expressive character of a rhythm.”\(^{55}\) He further divides this type into two groups—

*anacrouses accélératrices* and *anacrouses suspensives*. Lussy’s main idea here is that the normative motion for an *anacrouse accélératrice* is forward moving while the normative motion for the *anacrouse suspensive* is to become slower. He explains, “Both of them, if one responds to their stimulus, upset the general movement of a piece: they accelerate it or retard it.”\(^{56}\) Lussy also commented on the how the relationship between an *anacrusis* and a downbeat affects the direction of the melodic line. He explains,

A slight slackening of the speed may occur on an anacrusis in movements and passages of moderate or slow tempo. This is particularly the case when the anacrusis is of a chromatic nature and contains a high sound. Ascending anacruses, on the contrary, have a hurrying tendency, especially when they occur in movements of a lively or moderately lively character.\(^{55}\)

Lussy cites *La Marseillaise* to demonstrate his ideas concerning the *anacrouses accélératrice*, as shown in Example 1.7. In these examples taken from *Le rythme musical*,

\(^{54}\) Lussy (1908, 20).

\(^{55}\) Ibid.

\(^{56}\) Quoted in Perkins (1961, 134).

\(^{57}\) Lussy (1903, 9).
Lussy specifies the ictûs points with martellato markings. He explains, “The anacruses, formed in each case by the three quavers, are not indispensable to the respective rhythms,” and that even with their removal, as shown in Example 1.7(b), “the fundamental idea remains the same.”

Example 1.7: Anacrouse accélératrice, Lussy’s analysis of La Marseillaise, mm. 1-4

Lussy uses the excerpt quoted in Example 1.8 to exemplify the anacrouse suspensive. The fermata over the initial B♭ is a striking and convincing example of an event “on which there is a tendency to dwell . . . We dwell involuntarily on this sound as though a pause were indicated. [Anton] Rubinstein and [Hans] von Bülow thus interpret it [this way].”

Example 1.8: Anacrouse suspensive, Schubert, Impromptu, Op. 90, No. 2, mm. 1-2

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58 Lussy (1903, 21).

59 Lussy (1908, 22).
Lussy devised five rhythmic categories to identify the ways in which units begin and end. Three of the five categories define beginnings, which (as listed above) can be *thesic*, *anacrustic*, or *décapité*; the remaining two classify endings, which can be *masculine* or *feminine*, as mentioned earlier. *Thesic* groups are units that begin with the initial *ictus* on the downbeat. For instance, the third movement of Beethoven’s Piano Sonata Op. 79, reproduced in Example 1.9, begins with a *thesic-dipody*. It is considered *thesic* because its initial sound falls on the first beat of the bar, and a *dipody* since the unit comprises two measures.

Example 1.9: Thesic group, Beethoven Piano Sonata Op. 79, Vivace, mm. 1-2

Anacrustic groups are when one or several notes precede the initial *ictus*. According to Lussy, an *anacrusis* can begin on any part of any beat within a measure except on the downbeat. Example 1.10 demonstrates a progression consisting of two *anacrustic dipodies*.

Example 1.10: Anacrustic groups, Beethoven Piano Sonata Op. 31/1, Allegretto, mm. 1-4

While Lussy did not extend his distinction between the initial and final *ictus* to larger rhythmic units, his ideas can be applied to larger groups or areas. Edmond Monod, who was
commissioned by the Comité de l’Association des Musiciens Suisses to publish the first book about Lussy’s theories, suggests this notion. For Monod, metrical difference in stress is possible among measure units. He states, “the existence of strong measures . . . is to be sure not only a possibility, but a fact.”60 This concept of larger bar groupings was first described by Edward T. Cone in his discussion of Romantic music. Cone explains,

one can find long stretches in which the measures combine into phrases that are themselves metrically conceived—into what I call hypermeasures. This is especially likely to occur whenever several measures in succession exhibit similarity of motivic, harmonic, and rhythmic construction. These almost demand to be counted as units.61

These issues will be fully explored and treated in the analyses that follow.

**Lussy’s Tripartite Classifications of Accent**

The most prominent contribution of Lussy’s *Traité* is his tripartite classification of accent. To highlight an expressive event, Lussy affiliates a type of accent with each of the characteristics of regularity and symmetry. Lussy labels the first two accents *accent métrique*—a stress on the first note of each measure—and *accent rythmique*, used to label the accents corresponding to the first and last notes of each rhythmic group.62 The examples below are taken from Lussy’s *Musical Expression* (pp. 33 and 45). In Example 1.11, Lussy explains that the notes marked with a chevron are accented because they are the first beats of each measure and also involve the longest notes. Lussy explains that such rhythms are of the utmost importance because “It is on these notes that singers and violinists produce the effect called vibrato.”

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60 Quoted in Perkins (1961, 147).

61 Cone (1968, 79).

62 Lussy (1885, 15).
Example 1.12 provides a clear illustration of 2-bar groupings (dipodies) in compound duple meter, each having an initial and final accent.

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Example 1.11: Accent métrique, Rossini, Stabat Mater, No. 2 “Air,” mm. 9-12

Example 1.12: Accent rythmique, André Grétry, excerpt from La rosière de Salency, Ma barque légère, mm. 9-12.

According to Lussy, the accent métrique and accent rythmique can assist in making a performance intelligible but they lack the ability to make it expressive. Thus, Lussy identifies a third type of accent, the accent pathétique. He explains,

> every time that a note or notes, foreign to the original key . . . appear and break the regularity of the [accent métrique] or destroy the symmetry of the first rhythmical design . . . consequently producing a startling impression . . . [their] essential character [are] defined by the single term the unexpected.

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Example 1.13 shows a phrase featuring modal mixture, taken from Lussy’s *Musical Expression* (p. 142). In this excerpt, Lussy observes that because the phrase begins in B♭ major, the listener will experience the chromatic notes, which suggest the parallel minor mode, as something

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63 Doğantan (1997, 146).

64 Lussy (1885, 125-6).
unexpected. Lussy contends, “Every note and every passage which causes a displacement of the tonic or a change of mode must be accented.”\(^{65}\)

![Musical notation](image)

Example 1.13: *Accents pathétiques*, François-Adrien Boieldieu, excerpt from *La dame blanche*

While the *accent rythmique* will generally supersede the *accent métrique*, the *accent pathétique* will always take precedence over both the *accent métrique* and the *accent rythmique*.\(^{66}\)

In chapters VII and VIII of the *Traité*, Lussy specifies two different ways in which the *accent pathétique* can be realized in performance: First, through more passion and energy, i.e. an *accelerando*, which must be followed by a gradual loss of intensity and slowing down, a *rallentando* or *ritardando*; and second, through greater intensity of volume, a *crescendo*, which will be followed by a reduced level of volume, a *diminuendo*. This balance of one force and its opposing or contrary force together form what Lussy identifies as *mouvement passionnel* for tempo changes and *nuance* for an increasing or decreasing of volume. For Lussy, *accent pathétique*, *mouvement passionnel*, and *nuances* are all interrelated. He argues that a primary source of expression in performance relates to the application of the *accent pathétique* and the execution of the *mouvement passionnel*. Lussy explains:

\(^{65}\) Lussy (1885, 143).

\(^{66}\) Ibid. (15).
Every time that the [accent pathétique] occurs on one or more consecutive notes, the feeling of the musician is excited by the obstacles which he has to surmount, and he becomes animated, impassioned, or deadened. The normal tempo is either quickened or slackened. The [mouvement passionnel] therefore acts detrimentally upon the normal tempo and destroys its regularity; but on the other hand, the piece gains in life and expression.\textsuperscript{67}

In the Traité, Lussy lists specific events to which the performer should apply an increase of velocity. Accelerated motion, for Lussy, may be “produced by several consecutive expressive notes, or by one note of exceptionally great length.” He goes on to say, however, that an accelerando must take place when a passage is ascending, as illustrated in Example 1.14, or by a configuration that involves an “exceptional amount of passion and excitement,”\textsuperscript{68} as shown in Example 1.15. Both excerpts are taken from Musical Expression (pp. 173 and 176).

Lussy offers a similar approach in passages that call for a deceleration. He explains that rallentandi arise when of one or two consecutive expressive notes occur at the beginning,

\textsuperscript{67} Lussy (1885, 165).

\textsuperscript{68} Ibid. (168).
middle, or end of a rhythm. He further describes that a *rallentando* is produced by “an ascending or descending progression resulting from fatigue and exhaustion” at the end of a rhythm or by exceptional change of mood—that is, a serene moment in the midst of an agitated, fast movement. Today, we would most likely hear what Lussy calls “fatigue and exhaustion” as a relaxation of tensions. The most common *rallentando* events are those passages that are initially presented in the major and then immediately echoed in the minor, as the brackets in Example 1.16 demonstrate.

Example 1.16: *Mouvement passionnel*, Mozart, Fantasy in C minor, K. 475, mm. 64-69

In his discussion of *nuances*, Lussy presents numerous rules instructing a performer where to offer greater or lesser fluctuations in volume and where to begin a *crescendo* or *diminuendo*. These principles are illustrated with various types of passages. Lussy, for instance, advises performers to *crescendo* in ascending passages or in passages in which the texture thickens, and apply a fuller tone and greater force to dotted rhythms, syncopations, and chromatic notes or chords. Longer notes, for Lussy, also require a greater force of energy “so

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69 Lussy (1885, 177 and 181).

70 Ibid. (186).

71 Ibid. (198-203).
that the tone may be sustained.” In Example 1.17, Lussy advises the performer to apply less force for the smaller durational values and greater force for the half note at the end of the excerpt. Lussy indicates this with dynamic and articulation markings that he adds to the score. This example can be found in *Musical Expression* (p. 200). Table 1.1 provides a brief synoptic account of Lussy’s accent types and taxonomy of expressive terms.

Example 1.17: Lussy’s nuances, Daniel Steibelt, Turkish Rondo in C, mm. 185-189

**Analysis**

*Chopin Prelude Op. 28, no. 7*

Chopin’s Prelude in A major, Op. 28 no. 7 proves to be an excellent introductory example for an application of Lussy’s theory. This seemingly simple work exploits a highly sophisticated combination of metrical, rhythmical, and tonal devices, and Lussy’s categories can help us to work toward an expressive performance.

My analysis will begin with a consideration of the Prelude’s rhythm, which consists of eight iterations of a 2-bar unit. Clearly, a sensitive performance of this Prelude will not present each of these eight rhythmic units in the same manner. The aim of my analysis is to consider

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72 Lussy (1885, 200). Lussy’s frame of reference is, of course, the piano, for which loudness equals sustainability.
Table 1.1: Lussy’s accent types and taxonomy of rhythmic and expressive terms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lussy’s Tripartite Accents:</th>
<th>Lussy’s Grouping of Sounds Concerning Rhythms:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• <em>Accent métrique</em>—a stress</td>
<td>• <em>Incise</em>—the most concise musical idea.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>on the first note of each</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>measure.</td>
<td>• <em>Rythme</em>—Lussy’s term for the level just</td>
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<tr>
<td>• <em>Accent rythmique</em>—accents</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>corresponding to the first</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>and last notes of a rhythmic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>group.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <em>Accent pathétique</em>—accents</td>
<td>• <em>Ictüs</em>—stable points at the beginning and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>on notes that break the</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>regularity of tonality, meter,</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>or rhythm.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• <em>L'ictus principal</em>—an ictus which the</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Lussy’s Pathétique Elements:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <em>Mouvement passionnel</em>—an</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>acceleration or slowing of</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tempo.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <em>Nuance</em>—an increasing and</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>decreasing of dynamics.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

various ways to shape the timing and dynamic of each unit, and then determine how to create a well-articulated progression for the composition as a whole. Since each unit is a partial and inconclusive segment that is a subdivision of a phrase, Lussy would identify these units as *incises*. In general, Lussy teaches that the first note of an *incise* is accented while the last note remains unaccented. Other factors, however, may override this instruction. Is this *incise*
beginning-accented or end-accented? The reader should experiment by tapping the rhythms shown in Example 1.18.

Example 1.18: Chopin, Prelude Op. 28 No. 7, mm. 1-2: three possible readings

In Example 1.18(a), the initial downbeat carries what Lussy identifies as an accent métrique—that is, a stress on the first note of each measure that will act as a point of initiation from which the energy flows. In Example 1.18(b), the second downbeat calls for greater stress since it involves a longer duration preceded by a shorter one. Lussy would refer to this agogic articulation as an accent rythmique, a goal toward which the unit’s energy is directed. In Example 1.18(c), both downbeats are stressed allowing the energy to flow in two directions. One should experiment with all three options and try to shape one’s performance by feeling an impulse surfacing from the first downbeat and progressing toward the second. To achieve this, Lussy would suggest integrating a nuance (an increasing and decreasing of dynamics), combined
with a *mouvement passionnel* (an acceleration or slowing of tempo). With both expressive gestures, he would recommend an interpretation that creates a balance of forces between the two articulations. For instance, a slight *accelerando* can be achieved by hurrying through the *anacrusis*, while counterbalancing it with a *ritardando* as the unit reaches its end. One should try testing various interpretations by adjusting the variables to one’s liking.

Ideally, to help us realize the criteria for a balanced performance, performers need to address local and large-scale structure. Edward T. Cone introduces the concept of hypermeasures in his analysis of this Prelude.\(^\text{73}\) Cone suggests that we consider alternative notations that enable us to feel the interaction of beats and their groupings at levels above that of the notated measure. For instance, he arranges mm. 1-4 as a pair of measures in 6/4 meter. One may experiment with different interpretations by tapping the two contrasting articulations shown in Example 1.19(a and b), and noting the distinctly different ways the metrical and hypermetrical accents are experienced.

Example 1.19: Prelude, mm. 1-4: two possible readings

\(^{73}\) Cone (1968, 39-43).
As mentioned above, Lussy identifies the stable points at the beginning and end of a musical unit as *ictüs*. When the initial *ictus* is stronger than the final one, it produces an impulse that sets the unit in motion. When the final *ictus* is stronger, it directs the energy of the unit to a point of arrival or completion. In Example 1.19(a), the first downbeat is taken to be the initial *ictus*, and the *anacrusis* that precedes it subtly adds to its function as a point of initiation from which the *rythme*’s energy flows. In this rendition, the basic scheme for the 4-bar *rythme* would produce an accentual pattern of strongest-weak-strong-weak. In Example 1.19(b), the last downbeat is taken to be the final *ictus* of the *rythme*, marking the point toward which the *rythme*’s energy is directed. This would create an accentual pattern of weak-strong-weak-strongest. Beginning-accented *rythmes* call for a slight *accelerando* into the downbeat of each odd bar and *decelerando* approaching the downbeat of the even bars. This concurs with the basic understanding of Lussy’s *mouvement passionnel*—with each force of energy there is a counter-force. The end-accented *rythmes* create a different effect—instead of accelerating into the downbeats of the odd bars, motion quickens into the even bars while slightly slowing into the odd bars. One may experiment with performing each of these alternatives, exploring different degrees of *rubato* and *nuances* to seek a balanced application.

At the 8-bar level, we are faced with the same choices of regulating accentuation as those of the 2- and 4-bar levels. Harmonic analysis helps determine how best to shape these units. One should try performing mm. 1-8 with the alternatives indicated in Example 1.20(a and b). Now we could compare the effect of playing the same passage with approximately equal stress at both the beginning and ending, but shaping our performance by thinking of energy emerging from the initial $V^7$ to the terminal I, as shown in Example 1.20(c).
Example 1.20: Prelude, mm. 1-8: three possible readings for the 8-bar level
For the antecedent phrase (mm. 1-8), any of these alternatives might contribute well to expressive performance. But if we look closely at the harmonies and melodic shape of mm. 9-12, we are faced with an event that will ultimately impact the decisions we have to make about regulating accentuation in the consequent phrase. The chord on the downbeat of m. 12 is striking and its potential for interpretative expression is clearly evident. Even though at the 8-bar level we considered accentuations only at beginnings and endings, we simply cannot ignore this powerful event that dominates the articulation of the consequent phrase and gives shape to the entire Prelude. Lussy would say that this moment calls for an accent pathétique—that is, an emphasis on notes that break the regularity of tonality, meter, or rhythm. Since this moment supports Chopin’s only crescendo marking, reaches the highest note of the Prelude, generates the thickest texture, and initiates an acceleration in harmonic rhythm, one might consider applying a touch of tenuto on each high C# combined with an accelerando and crescendo leading into m. 11, followed by a slight ritenuto and a continuous crescendo to the downbeat of m. 12. This effect of smaller and larger gradations in velocity and volume corresponds to Lussy’s mouvement passionnel. With a considerable decline of energy after the climax, all of the remaining energy, however, will continue flowing to the final cadence—toward what Cone refers to as the “structural downbeat” of the Prelude.

If we play m. 12 with the emphasis the climax deserves, then the downbeat of m. 13 will naturally lose some of the emphasis it would otherwise receive. By underplaying m. 13, and giving slightly more emphasis to the V⁹ in m. 14, we can continue the reversal of expected accentuation as we drive to the final cadence. The closing tonic arrives in a relatively weak bar, but one can even experiment with giving just a bit more emphasis to the last ascending melodic leap in m. 16, since it is the largest leap in the Prelude. Moreover, the kind of emphasis that is
needed for the climax is not the same articulation that is needed for the final cadence. A gradual and steady \textit{ritardando} and \textit{diminuendo} from m. 12 to the downbeat of m. 16 is one possible interpretation. With the initiation of a motivic figuration in the alto voice that descends to the cadential dominant (A$\#$-B-A$\#$-G$\#$), m. 12 leads harmonically to the structural dominant in bar 14. It locally resolves the tension from the preceding harmony while maintaining a dissonant note in its top register. This makes the closing tonic appear in a metrically weak measure, serving as both a goal of motion and a release of tension, as shown at the 2-bar level in Example 1.21. The symmetry of the basic metric organization established in the antecedent phrase will now change, and performers must be perceptive in their awareness of this. This irregularity is clear and striking only when felt within a context of relative regularity.

Example 1.21: Prelude, mm. 9-16: degrees of accentuation at the 2-, 4, and 8-bar levels

\begin{verbatim}
8-bar level:
4-bar level:
2-bar level:
AM: V$^7$ I V$^7$/ii ii$^7$ V$^9$ I
mm:  9  10  11  12  13  14  15  16

Degrees of accentuation:
* = most essential \textit{accent pathétique}
\end{verbatim}
Cone suggests that the essential structure of the entire Prelude consists of “an extended upbeat followed by [a] downbeat,” best understood as tension (initial stress) followed by relaxation (structural downbeat). My analysis, when expanded to the 16-bar level, does indeed agree with Cone’s reading that “the unifying effect” of the Prelude leads to “the weakening of the antecedent cadence and of the consequent initial downbeat,” resulting in forward impulse to the final cadence. As Cone clarifies, this rendition generates two essential articulations—the initial ictus, serving as an impulse of motion, and the structural downbeat, serving as the goal of motion. Lussy would refer to the latter as the ictus principal, the more influential of the two ictus points. This interpretation relates to one possible way of performing Lussy’s incises and rythmes, and certainly, there are many ways in which Cone’s analysis can be associated with Lussy’s articulations and his instructions for realizing them in performance. However, it is worth considering other interpretations that Lussy’s theory suggests. For instance, the climax of the Prelude occurs in m. 12 and Lussy would argue for an essential accent pathétique—a stress that Cone’s reading largely overlooks. While Cone concludes that the entire Prelude can be felt as a single, long phrase, I believe that the Prelude’s peak of tension produces a third essential articulation. As shown in Example 1.22, these three deeper-level articulations unfold in the following manner: the initial ictus of mm. 1-2 sets the Prelude in motion; the crescendo into m. 12 functions as a pivotal point of tension with its metric syncopation perceptible at the 2- and 4-bar levels; and at the 16-bar level, the ictus principal of mm. 15-16 functions as a point of relaxation with its final cadence serving as a tonal goal, releasing all tension. As Cone suggests, we may underplay the tonic ending of the antecedent phrase to avoid premature closure.

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74 Cone (1968, 25).

75 Ibid. (42).
Example 1.22: Prelude: deeper-level articulations with linear and harmonic considerations

however, at the 8-bar level we should articulate m. 9 so as to make it almost equal to m. 1 since it is the point of initiation for the second phrase.

Through the application of these three deeper-level articulations, we generate an overall tempo fluctuation as follows: a flowing antecedent phrase that steadily moves towards the imperfect cadence at mm. 7-8; a consequent phrase that begins with a slight acceleration; and a significant and continual decrease of tempo immediately following the peak of m. 12, dissolving into the final cadence. The dynamic gestures associated with these three deeper-level articulations likewise give shape to the musical expression of the Prelude. At the 16-bar level, the initial ictus of mm. 1-2 serves as a generator of motion. The ictus principal (mm. 15-16), on the contrary, calls for a diminuendo resolving the Prelude’s tension completely. Finally, although
energy is directed towards the *ictus principal*, the expressive climax of the Prelude is clearly marked by m. 12.

**Conclusion**

By deriving principles from Lussy’s theory, my approach departs from Cone’s in several ways. Cone is primarily interested in formal considerations; I am concerned with a nuanced and varied performance of surface details. Cone observes two strong points of deeper-level articulation; I view three. And lastly, Cone interprets his structural downbeat as the ultimate active force in the Prelude; I argue that m. 12 generates the Prelude’s dramatic action, marking a critical point in the directed flow of its energy.

I conclude my discussion with an annotated score that projects many of the features discussed in the analysis (see Example 1.23). My expressive rendition is one possible interpretation based on choices derived from the application of Lussy’s theory. I suggest that three deeper-level articulations guide the overall dynamic nuances and tempo variations. The initial *ictus* of m. 1 sets in motion an alteration of strong and weak bars. This point of initiation is followed by a decrease of dynamic intensity. However, its harmonic implications permit me to choose an *accelerando* through the downbeat of m. 2, as a result of the dominant chord needing to resolve. Its gravitational pull to the tonic triad allows me to evade any sense of repose between the first and second *incise*. Therefore, the rhythmic motion pushes forward. Because the second *incise* reaches a higher plateau, it naturally will receive a stronger dynamic nuance. Its rising contour reaches the tonic pitch A for the first time in the melody. This leads me to interpret the second *incise* as a middle-accented unit followed by a brief caesura, which will help distinguish to the listener clear 4-bar units. The third *incise*, in my rendition, is the softest. This decision is
Example 1.23: Prelude: annotated score based on the application of Lussy’s theory
based on the deeper-level articulations from the 8-bar level analysis, which revealed that mm. 5-6 are experienced as a weaker pulse than mm. 7-8 (see Example 1.22). At the beginning of the consequent phrase, the momentum slightly builds, anticipating the surprise of m. 12. As Cone correctly observed, a performer needs to take extra precaution with the beginning of this phrase because: “The phrases are too similar, since each proceeds twice from the dominant to the tonic. And although the first phrase does not arrive at a perfect cadence, it nevertheless marks too firm a close too early in the piece.”

To differentiate m. 9 from m. 1, I opted to begin the consequent phrase with less dynamic intensity. The listener by now is already familiar with the regularity of the metric structure—therefore, m. 9 needs no additional stress. Its grouping structure is phrased as a weak beginning-accented incise. As noted in my analysis, the dynamic intensity of m. 12 functions as a dramatic point of tension with its metric syncopation perceptible at the 2- and 4-bar levels. At the beginning of m. 11, Chopin marks a crescendo to the downbeat of m. 12, demarcating the Prelude’s most expressive harmony. Ironically, in Rubinstein’s 1946 recording, he employs a sudden decrease of dynamic intensity right before the downbeat in m. 12, negating Chopin’s marking. While this may seem almost counterintuitive to Lussy’s description of pathétique events, nowhere in his theory does he emphatically treat all dissonances equally.

Doğantan explains,

Lussy does not hierarchize chromatic notes and chords in terms of the degree of dynamic intensity they require in performance, because the degree to which a tonal event is experienced as unexpected and foreign depends on the performer’s previous musical experience and evaluation of the tonal context.

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76 Cone (1968, 41).
77 Rubinstein (1946).
Lussy’s fundamental assumption in this connection is that ultimately performers must choose themselves which relationships are most crucial to accentuate. The highest note of a phrase, in Lussy’s theory, is often depicted as an accent pathétique. But unlike extraordinarily long notes, “which generate acceleration, extraordinarily high [notes] slow the tempo down.”\footnote{Doğantan (2002, 134).} The climactic moment is followed by a long caesura. To balance the loss of velocity, I chose to propel the successive incise forward, thus allowing the alto line to discharge its newly aroused dissonance (mm. 13-14). I end the Prelude with a slight crescendo to reach the final tonic pitch in the melody, coupled with an intense loss of velocity. Like Cone’s structural downbeat, the ictus principal of mm. 15-16 releases all tensions, serving as a tonal goal.
CHAPTER TWO
CHOPIN MAZURKA OP. 7, NO. 2 IN A MINOR

Introduction

As Michael Klein has observed, “The mazurka is a curious multiplicity.” ⁸⁰ This is because it is not one dance but three, each of which is defined by differing tempos or individual patterns of accentuation. In his article entitled “Mazurka,” Stephen Downes distinguishes the three dances by their tempi. He explains, “The fastest is the oberek or obertas, a rapid whirling dance for couples; the mazurka itself (or mazur) is somewhat slower but still of lively character, while the kujawiak is a dance of more moderate tempo, with longer phrase lengths.” ⁸¹ Chopin biographer Aleksander Poliński attempted to distinguish the three dances by their specific patterns of accent. For instance, he identified the kujawiak, a folk dance that comes from the Cracow region of the Kujawy province, with its “main stress fall[ing] on any part of the fourth measure.” ⁸² This would concur with Downe’s description of longer phrase lengths. Poliński described the oberek, which originated in the Mazowsze region, as a dance that accented “the last part of the second measure.” ⁸³ The placement of strong accents in alternating, rather than successive, measures may suggest a faster tempo. If so, this would again agree with Downe’s definition. But for the earliest recorded folk dance, the mazur, which stems from the Polish region of Mazovi, Poliński provides an elusive and arbitrary description stating, “accents in the

⁸⁰ Klein (2012, 238).
⁸¹ Downes (2013).
⁸² Quoted in Swartz (1973, 30).
⁸³ Ibid. (31).
mazur can fall according to the imagination of the composer—on any part of the measure—and any number of accents can fall in each bar.”

Whereas Poliński was unable to provide a fully satisfactory description of the mazur, Klein’s depiction of this dance form offers further clarification. He explains, “A dotted rhythm on the first beat may appear in a mazur . . . [and] a strong accent may land on the third beat or on the second beat.” What is not clear is if this accentual pattern occurs in successive or alternating measures. Perhaps it may be both. While the differences between the dances are subtle, as we shall see, the characteristics of each dance can aid a performer in understanding and interpreting the rhythmic impulses and formal designs of Chopin’s Mazurkas. Moreover, the rhythmic patterns and patterns of accents implicit in these dance idioms correspond to Lussy’s theory quite well.

In her dissertation, “The Mazurkas of Chopin: Certain Aspects of Phrasing,” Anne Swartz identified two of the three dances in the Mazurka in A Minor, Op. 7, No. 2, as shown in Example 2.1. The opening section of the Mazurka begins with a dotted rhythm on the first beat of m. 1, which drives to an agogic accent on the downbeat in m. 2, creating a 2-bar grouping. For Swartz, these features simulate the characteristics of a mazur. Measures 41-44, according to Swartz, resemble a kujawiak. This is apparent since it employs a pedal tone—which leads to a strong dynamic accent in the fourth measure of the phrase. The longer bar grouping undermines the secondary accent that falls on the first downbeat of each 2-bar group. This kujawiak is

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84 Swartz (1973, 28).
85 Klein (2012, 240).
86 Swartz (1973, 134).
a. 2-bar groupings in the opening, mm. 1-4 (*mazur*)

*Vivo, ma non troppo. (♩ = 160)*

![Musical notation of the opening, mm. 1-4]

b. 4-bar grouping in the B section, mm. 41-44 (*kujawiak*)

![Musical notation of the B section, mm. 41-44]

Example 2.1: Chopin, Mazurka Op. 7, No. 2: two types of Polish dances

distinct because of its lucid musical boundary from the *mazur* before and after. Furthermore, its expressive melody is written in $f\#$ minor (the relative minor of the parallel major).

The challenge in performing this Mazurka is not in simply identifying the individual dances, but rather in considering various ways to shape the timing and dynamic of each rhythmic grouping within the Mazurka, and then determining how to create an expressive interpretation based on each section’s accentual pattern. By understanding how Chopin varies the rhythms and accentual patterns within various phrases and smaller units, we can formulate alternative ways to connect and to perform short segments and how to shape their successions into convincing larger designs.
Literature Review

David Beach, in his *Advanced Schenkerian Analysis: Perspectives on Phrase Rhythm, Motive and Form*, provides us with an analysis of Chopin’s Mazurka in A Minor, Op. 7, No. 2. In this analysis, Beach focuses primarily on the Mazurka’s linear patterns and musical form, providing an in-depth discussion of its first section, mm. 1-32. Essential to Beach’s analysis of the Mazurka’s linear formation is his observation of neighboring figures. He notes that the Mazurka begins with a double neighboring figure that embellishes the Kopfton, as shown in Example 2.2.

![Example 2.2: Chopin, Mazurka: Schenkerian voice-leading graph from Beach’s analysis, mm. 1-4](image)

As Beach has observed, a most striking feature of Chopin’s Mazurka is the melodic descending linear progression of a fourth in the antecedent phrase, followed by a descending linear progression of a fifth in the consequent phrase. As illustrated in Example 2.3(a), Beach regards the restatement of the Kopfton in the beginning of the consequent phrase, as the result of an interruption. Example 2.3(b) illustrates a chromatic descending linear progression appearing
a. Descent of the *Urlinie* in the antecedent phrase, mm. 1-8

Example 2.3: Chopin, Mazurka: graphs adapted from Beach’s analysis under a sequential progression in mm. 21-24, preparing the reprise. As the outer voices progress to the restatement in m. 25, they move in parallel tenths on successive downbeats. Lastly, at the
beginning of the reprise, Beach acknowledges, “for the first time, the upper neighbor introducing 5 is given consonant support.”

In a paper entitled “A Different Reading for the Same Music,” read at the 1993 annual meeting of the Music Theory Society for New York State, Edward Laufer discussed essential motivic patterns that he discovered in the Mazurka in direct succession or over larger spans of the music. Example 2.4 demonstrates how the opening neighboring motive in mm. 1-2 (F-D-F-E) is immediately restated down a step lower in mm. 3-4, resulting in a rhythmically transformed

Example 2.4: Chopin, Mazurka: motivic analysis of the antecedent phrase adapted from Laufer’s analysis, mm. 1-8

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87 Beach (2012, 113).

88 A discussion of this analysis is found in Yip (2010, 22-3).
variant (D-B-D-C). Laufer claims that as the phrase reaches its cadence the neighboring figure is transformed, overlapping itself into “a dense pattern of motivic repetition.”

Laufer further argues that the motive reappears in the b section in mm. 16-21, this time as a chromatically altered variant, as shown in Example 2.5. Laufer asserts that the implied e⁵ at the cadence of m. 16 is carried over into the following phrase, creating an expanded version of the motive ((E)-C- Eb-D). He identifies this gesture as a prolongation of 5—the initial note of the Urlinie—over the b section, mm. 17-24. This expansion proceeds to its upper neighbor, 6 in m.

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Example 2.5: Chopin, Mazurka: motivic and prolongational analysis of the b section adapted from Laufer’s analysis, mm. 15-25

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89 Yip (2010, 22-3).
25, for the beginning of the restatement. In m. 18, the d\textsuperscript{5} begins another variant of the motive (D-B\textsubscript{b}-(D)-C\textsharp), this time involving an octave displacement and an implied note.

Whereas Beach’s analysis discusses the descent of the *Urlinie* (5-4-3-2-1), Laufer’s reading calls attention to a motivic descending linear progression of a fourth in mm. 1-4 (6-5-4-3). Beach’s linear progression connects members of the tonic triad, each of which is given harmonic support, while Laufer’s motivic reading identifies a secondary progression that is not part of the fundamental structure. It begins on f\textsuperscript{5} and moves into an inner voice. Although the linear progression in the soprano line, F-E-D resolves to C in bar 4, Laufer argues that this descending pattern is previewed in mm. 1-2, involving motion into an inner voice and an implied note, as shown in Example 2.6.

![Example 2.6: Chopin, Mazurka: motivic analysis of the opening gesture adapted from Laufer’s analysis, mm. 1-4](image)

A chromaticized variant of the motive (F-E-\textsubscript{b}-D-C\textsharp-D) appears in the tenor voice in the sequential progression at the end of the b section, mm. 21-24, as shown in Example 2.7. Laufer’s point here is that this inner voice (like the succession of F-E-D-C in mm. 1-4) is not structural but involves dissonant neighbor and passing tones. He maintains that these motivic parallelisms
provide the Mazurka with musical coherence, helping us to better understand and appreciate specific “characteristic[s] of Chopin’s music.”

Example 2.7: Chopin, Mazurka: Laufer’s analysis of the tenor voice in the b section, mm. 21-25

Analysis

Building on Beach’s study of the Mazurka’s linear formations and Laufer’s ideas of motivic parallelism, my discussion begins by addressing individual aspects of the composition that relate to matters of expressive performance. The formal structure of the Mazurka is a ternary scheme, consisting of ABA\(^1\). The A section (mm. 1-32) involves a rounded binary design—a principal theme (referred to below as a\(^1\))—that is, a 16-bar antecedent-consequent période, an 8-bar bridge (b) and a restatement of an 8-bar version of the opening theme (a\(^2\)). The B section (mm. 33-56) is in the parallel major key (A major) and its relative minor (F\# minor), also displaying a rounded binary design, followed by a da capo repetition of mm. 1-16, as shown in Example 2.8.

\(^{90}\) Yip (2010, 23)
Throughout the opening section, agogic accents occur in all even-numbered measures. The antecedent phrase, furthermore, begins with a non-tonic harmony—the subdominant—and is preceded by $\hat{5}$ as an unharmonized upbeat. This withholding of tonic harmony in the first measure sets up an opposition between harmony and meter. As Carl Schachter has observed, this “denying [of] metrical emphasis to the governing harmony . . . [sets up a] lack of correspondence between metrical accent and tonal structure.”

Thus, the delayed tonic, and the regular periodicity of influential accents, may suggest hearing the even-numbered measures as strong, creating a suggestive rhythmic fluidity in the Mazurka.

The regularity of 2-bar groupings suggests a corresponding organization of 4- and 8-bar groupings. The accents of initiation (initial ictus) occur in odd-numbered measures while agogic accents occur in even-numbered measures (final ictus). Typically, a 4-bar hypermeasure begins with a strong stress, suggesting a beginning-accented rhythmic grouping. Chopin’s agogic accents in the even-numbered measures, however, suggest an end-accented rhythmic grouping—thus contravening normative alternation of strong and weak pulses in a typical hypermeasure. In

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his book, *The Time and Music*, Jonathan Kramer addresses this very issue of accentuation in a hypermeasure. He explains,

> There are three basic schemes that have been proposed for the relative accentual strength of the four measures of the normal four-bar [hypermeasure]: 1. strong-weak-weak-strong 2. strong-weak-strong-weak [and] 3. weak-strong-weak-strong[.] The first scheme is favored by Edward Cone, Peter Westergaard, and William Benjamin. The second is preferred by Carl Schachter and Wallace Berry. The third, the suggestion of Hugo Reimann, is explored by Arthur Komar. Fred Lerdahl and Ray Jackendoff offer a valuable discussion of the problems inherent in each reading . . . These three possible readings of a four-bar [hypermeasure] differ from each other fundamentally. I would not argue that any of the three ideas is unequivocally useless, but rather that they depend on different understandings of accent.92

Lussy’s tripartite classification of accents will help clarify the differences between metric and rhythmic structures that interact in the Mazurka. These issues of alternative accentual patterns will be explored more fully later in the analysis.

I begin the analysis by identifying various dance idioms and rhythmic patterns—regular and irregular—that help shape an expressive performance. I then consider several aspects of the Mazurka’s tonal implications—structurally significant arrivals—allowing the performer to decide which to project. In closing, I will compare and contrast the B section to the opening section, discussing various ways a performer may produce satisfactory ways to unify the work, and to realize Chopin’s nuances.

**Rhythmic and Tonal Implications in the A section**

While there are opposing viewpoints regarding nineteenth-century *tempo rubato*, rhythmic flexibility, undeniably, is an intrinsic part of performing the music of Chopin. This is evident from testimony by individuals who where fortunate enough to hear Chopin’s playing. Berlioz, for instance, took special interest in noting Chopin’s sense of *rubato*, stating “his

92 Kramer (1988, 84-6).
interpretation is shot through with a thousand nuances of movement of which he alone holds the secret, and which are impossible to convey by instructions.”

More specifically, in Chopin’s performance of the mazurkas, Charles Hallé observed, “a remarkable feature of his playing was the entire freedom with which he treated the rhythm.” Comments such as these imply that Chopin’s ability to create a coherent expressive and dramatic effect in his music may have been achieved by varying the basic rhythmic patterns. In a similar fashion, we must assess various ways in which we can shape the incises, the rythmes, and the large-scale rhythmic and metric organization of the phrases and sections.

Of particular interest in this Mazurka is the dance rhythm of the mazur, which Swartz identified as a pattern with the strong accent falling in the second measure of each 2-bar grouping. Determining the rhythmic shape of the opening period is an important first step in achieving an expressive rendition. Let us begin by focusing on the ways in which we can vary the treatment of the motives on the first beats of the odd-numbered measures. Ultimately, this will determine how we perform the agogic accents in the even-numbered measures, allowing us to consider various ways of shaping the 2-bar incises as beginning-, middle-, or end-accented rhythmic groups. Example 2.9 reproduces the opening incise in the antecedent phrase. The initial impulse of the phrase is an upbeat leading to a dotted rhythm on the first beat, which Klein acknowledges as another “characteristic . . . [of] a mazur.”

Both the upbeat and the first beat occur without harmonic support. It is only when we hear the incise’s note of resolution that we can retrospectively identify the first beat in m. 1 as an

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93 As quoted in Eigeldinger (1986, 71).

94 Ibid. (72).

95 Klein (2012, 239).
upper neighbor to 5, which receives tonic support in m. 2. For Lussy, the upper neighbor note is an exceptional event that requires the expressive accent especially “if it falls at the beginning of a rhythm.”\(^96\) Moreover, Lussy would also assign this upper neighbor note an accent métrique and an accent rythmique, since it occurs on the first beat of the measure and coincides with the first strong beat of the incise. The agogic accent in m. 2, however, marks another expressive event that may override the accent in m.1, according to Lester’s definition of durational accents. He explains,

not all accent-producing factors operate with equal importance. Some factors by themselves can produce a more powerful accent than several other factors combined . . . [e.g.] accents that are produced by . . . duration are more deeply embedded in musical structure than accents produced by other factors.\(^97\)

Lussy, similarly, would identify the first beat of m. 2 as an expressive accent not only because it is a suspended note, but also because of its longer durational value. Like Lester, Lussy

\(^{96}\) Lussy (1885, 140).

\(^{97}\) Lester (1986, 40-1).
believes agogic accents “represent an intentional and very great increase of power.”\(^98\) Thus, we might consider slightly stretching the first beat of m. 1—that is, playing the upper neighbor note with an accent pathétique followed by the application of a mouvement passionnel, directed toward the agogic accent in m. 2, where a slight slowing might be observed. Rubinstein’s 1932 recording displays this exact effect—by elongating the first beat slightly, he makes the initial impulse of the phrase sound like the beginning of a section, even without harmonic support.\(^99\)

Another alternative is to consider the same approach in m. 1, but this time without the rallentando. Henryk Sztompka’s 1955 recording of this Mazurka maintains a fairly steady tempo in m. 2, enhancing the feeling of triple time.\(^100\)

As Laufer has indicated in the second incise (mm. 3-4), a similar neighboring figure is heard a third lower. This motivic repetition, along with its single phrasing slur over two measures and its crescendo and decrescendo pairing, helps the listener hear a continuation of the established accentual pattern of 2-bar groupings, inviting the performer to articulate a rendition similar to that of the first incise. While the second incise resembles the first in several ways—the left hand rests on downbeats, the strong agogic accent in the melody—there are, however, crucial differences. This unit lacks an upbeat, and its fleeter and more decorous melody moves with greater urgency toward the focal pitch D on the second downbeat. Notice that in the first incise the pitch F is sounded six times between the treble and bass clefs, while in the second incise the pitch D is sounded six times as well.

\(^98\) Lester (1986, 130).

\(^99\) Rubinstein (1932).

\(^100\) Sztompka (1955).
When both *incises* are combined together to create a *rythme*, the performer can voice the accompaniment chords in the left hand in such a way as to project the secondary linear progression of a fourth (F–E–D–C), which Laufer identified. By slightly bringing out this linear motive in the accompaniment, the pianist can enliven the texture while reinforcing the descent of the top line. This builds further tension just before the arrival of the tonic triad in m. 4, with its low a on beat 2, and helps to define the *rythme*’s rhythmic shape. The appearance of this lower register is a dramatic addition to the accompaniment. A registral accent, according to Lester, can produce a strong sense of accentuation or help shape the rhythmic design. He explains, “even in nonimitative passages, or in passages that are not truly contrapuntal, the accents caused by the entrance of new components of the texture can be quite important to the overall rhythm.”

It is also important to observe the change of texture and the change of articulation that Chopin has written in the accompanimental figures (see Example 2.10). By changing the left-hand articulation markings from *portato* to *legato*, Chopin is inviting the performer to play the attacks in m. 4 more smoothly, and perhaps, even more importantly, to slightly stretch the meter before

![Example 2.10: Mazurka, A section: shaping of the first *rythme*, mm. 1-4](image)

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101 Lester (1986, 30).
reaching the note of resolution in the melody. This can be justified since the first important change of pattern in the accompaniment involves a leap, creating additional space. Interestingly, in the consequent phrase, Chopin delays this change of pattern until its sixth measure (m. 14) rather than its fourth measure. Conceivably, this may suggest an increase of forward motion in the consequent phrase.

In mm. 5-8, the incise’s established accentual pattern of 2-bar groupings continues. However, its phrasing, harmonies, and tempo fluctuation introduce a more flowing and unified line that Lussy would view as evidence that suggests organizing the unit into four measures rather than two. A comparison of the first rythme’s melody to that of the second is illustrated in Example 2.11. Note that neither of the incises in the second rythme begins with an upbeat or involves a non-harmonic tone on the first beat of the even-numbered measures (mm. 6 and 8). This subtle distinction suggests a different plan of pacing. Whereas the first rythme may involve

a. First rythme, mm. 1-4

Example 2.11: Mazurka, A section: melodic comparison of the first two rythmes
a slight separation between mm. 2-3, as there is a change of harmony over the barline, the second
rythme may not, because Chopin allows the harmonic continuation in mm. 6-7. Further evidence
for a 4-bar grouping is reinforced with Chopin’s slurring and reversal of melodic contour (mm.
6-7). As suggested in Example 2.11(b), the reader may try experimenting with the pedaling by
not releasing it between mm. 6-7. The resonance of the pedal, consequently, will naturally
increase the volume and intensity of the phrase.

The second rythme begins with an eighth-note triplet figure on beat 1 of m. 5, followed
by three quarter notes that lie under a single slur over the bar line, as shown in Example 2.12.
This phrasing suggests forward momentum as the line ascends. An agogic accent on beat two
occurs for the first time in m. 6 under the E minor harmony, which leads to a strepato marking
indicated by Chopin in m. 7. Whereas the agogic accents of mm. 2 and 4 were non-harmonic
tones—a suspension and an appoggiatura—the agogic accent in m. 6 is consonant—a chordal
skip. It no longer resolves down by step, thus breaking the pattern of the “sigh” motive.
Although it does have consonant support, Lussy believes agogic accents require great force,
resulting in an increase of tempo, “especially when they are syncopated.”\(^{102}\) This notion of
accelerating is reinforced by the harmony—the tonic chord of m. 6 leads to a cadential six-four
chord through the first two beats of m. 7—and by the change of contour in the accompanimental
figures in mm. 5-6, where Chopin places the low bass notes on beat three instead of beat two,
pressing more forcefully towards their approaching downbeats. The arrival of the E minor
harmony on beat one of m. 8 helps unify the rythme as a whole by serving as a local harmonic
goal. Furthermore, the agogic accent in m. 6 (e\(^5\)) reiterates the original melodic note of the
Mazurka, again pressing the line forward. This is reinforced by the registral shift of the rythme’s

\(^{102}\) Lussy (1885, 130).
a. Shaping for a 4-bar grouping

Example 2.12: Mazurka, A section: shaping of the second rythme, mm. 5-8; two possible readings

high point (e^5) to the cadential arrival (e^4). Lastly, the pivotal chord in m. 5 suggests a double function—on one level, the continuation of tonic harmony, and on another level, the subdominant in the minor dominant key. The latter would imply a harmonic progression in the bass involving scale degrees 4-5-1 in the key of E minor; again suggesting the possibility of a 4-bar grouping rather than two.
Hearing the second *rythme* as a continuous 4-bar unit is one possible reaction a performer may have to Chopin’s phrasing and accent markings. The harmonic parallelism between the two *rythmes*, however, may suggest another option. In both *rythmes*, the harmonic scheme involves a predominant-tonic-dominant-tonic progression, the first one in the key A minor and the second in the key of E minor, as shown in Example 2.13. To highlight this parallelism, a performer may choose to shape both *rythmes* similarly. Whereas in Example 2.12(a), I suggested grouping the second *rythme* into a single, uninterrupted 4-bar phrase, another possibility is to emphasize the salient group boundaries of each *incise*, producing a pacing that involves a breath between mm. 6-7, as heard in mm. 2-3 (see Example 2.12, b). By taking time to reach up to the e5 in m. 6 and slightly lengthening its duration, this intensifies the momentum of the phrase as it reaches the

Example 2.13: Mazurka, A section: the harmonic scheme of the antecedent phrase, mm. 1-8
downbeat of the following measure. The lingering on this note is quite expressive and will cause a slight stress on the downbeat of m. 7, allowing the listener to hear well-defined 2-bar groupings. Rubinstein’s rendering of this passage has exactly this effect. He elongates the agogic accent in m. 6 and then pushes forward across the bar line. His performance timing conveys a grouping structure in which the harmonic progression of mm. 5-8 explicitly produces a sense of temporal division into clear 2-bar units. Ultimately, a performer may choose to alternate between 2- and 4-bar groupings in subsequent repetitions of this passage.

By grouping the second *rythme* into a 4-bar unit, the antecedent phrase becomes a typical sentence construction—a grouping of 2+2+4. Like the antecedent phrase, the consequent phrase is rhythmically shaped by its agogic accents, conveying the salience of its smaller groups. These agogic accents create a regular pattern throughout the entire A section in which the even-numbered measures receive greater emphasis. This notion is reinforced by the tonal arrivals that occur in the even-numbered measures, which can convey a release of tension.

While the consequent phrase is similar to the antecedent phrase in terms of its accentual pattern, it does display a different plan of pacing as a result of its harmonies. It involves a harmonic progression that tonicizes the key of the Neapolitan, followed by a textural break in both the melody and accompaniment, as shown in Example 2.14. Though it is not uncommon to find the Neapolitan chord in a mazurka, it is less common to find its key as a goal of motion. In m. 12, Chopin substitutes a VI chord in lieu of the expected tonic chord. Unlike the imperfect authentic cadence in m. 4, this deceptive cadence creates no real sense of repose. It forms a bass line that moves towards the Neapolitan (VI to V7/II to II'). The deceptive cadence provides the impetus for a varied repetition for the end of the first *rythme*. Whereas mm. 3-4 entailed a slight breath, separating mm. 4-5, the lack of change in the bass in mm. 12-13 creates forward motion.
a. No caesura in mm. 12-13

![Musical example showing the harmonic scheme for the end of the consequent phrase.](image)

b. Brief caesura in mm. 12-13

![Musical example showing a brief caesura at the end of m. 12.](image)

Example 2.14: Mazurka, A section: harmonic scheme for the end of the consequent phrase, mm. 12-16

to the downbeat of m. 14. Even though Chopin calls for a *rallentando* in m. 13, the bass notes of mm. 12-13 prevents a clear separation, as indicated by the arrow below the staff in Example 2.14(a). Naturally, the deceptive cadence can create a slight relaxation, allowing a performer to choose to articulate a brief caesura at the end of m. 12, as shown in Example 2.14(b).

Measure 14 is an important event similar to m. 6 where the emphasis of stress can be shifted to beat 2. In m. 14, Chopin mimics the agogic accent in m. 6 by marking a *fermata* over a quarter-note rest, stopping the harmonic momentum in a dramatic way. In general, $b\frac{2}{2}$ has a strong tendency to move downward by step, which the Mazurka does in fact achieve. The
melodic motion in the passage follows standard voice-leading procedures—the diminished third is filled in by a passing tone ($b\flat-\overline{1}-\overline{1}#7$). Although Chopin breaks the voice-leading momentum with a fermata, the interrupted progression does not impede the eventual succession of $\overline{11}$II to $V^7$. The emphasis of the voice leading is still heard, particularly since Chopin placed it in the top voice. Aldwell, Schachter and Cadwallader explain that when the Neapolitan sixth chord goes directly to the dominant, “The diminished 3rd, even when filled in, often makes for a peculiarly intense melodic line, especially when it occurs in the soprano.”

Therefore, even though Chopin writes a fermata on the third beat of m. 14, the voice leading involves a continuous line, but dramatically broken by the chordal skip to $d^5$ and the protracted rest, making the ending of the consequent phrase sound like a unified 4-bar unit. To highlight this expressive moment, special attention by the performer is required.

The silence of the fermata heightens the drama in a noticeable way. And the performer must retain and project the voice leading of the soprano in such a way so that the listener will understand the function of the Neapolitan chord as a chromatically altered intermediate harmony, which can only be appreciated in retrospect. Chopin’s skillful integration of a fermata over a rest creates the effect of surprise. The surprise, however, is relatively weak since it precedes an immediate return to the tonic key, indicating that the Neapolitan chord is of a predominant function rather than a cadential goal. What is imperative in the consequent phrase, apart from the voice leading, is that the pianist should sense the enormous expressive potential conveyed by the tempo contrast—poco rallentando in m. 13 followed by an a tempo in m. 15—and the dynamic contrast—a crescendo / decrescendo pairing that continues through the silence. These contrasting elements, along with the voice leading, coordinate a design that allows the performer to choose

103 Aldwell, Schachter and Cadwallader (2011, 538).
between shaping the consequent phrase into shorter 2-bar segments or into larger 4-bar segments. By segmenting the phrase into 4-bar groups, the plan of pacing will accelerate through the fermata, allowing the voice leading to govern the momentum. This strategy is suggested only for the first statement of the período. In Rubinstein’s performance, with each repeat, the span of the fermata lengthens, so that the da capo entails the most dramatic rendition.

As mentioned earlier, Chopin creates the pattern of weak-strong metric organization from the very start of the Mazurka by producing agogic accents on the even-numbered measures. Another striking feature that affirms the weak-strong pattern is the deliberate avoidance of the tonic harmony on the first measure of the work. In an effort to understand Chopin’s non-tonic beginnings, in a similar passage (from Chopin’s Mazurka Op. 24, no. 3), Schachter suggests the possibility of hearing m. 1 as an upbeat to m. 2. He explains, “After all, the feeling of forward movement into the tonic of the second bar does give [the first full bar] something of the feeling of an upbeat.”¹⁰⁴ As Example 2.15 demonstrates, all of the tonic chords in the A section fall on even-numbered measures—mm. 2, 4, 10, and 16 in the key of A minor, and mm. 6 and 8 in the key of E minor. Measures 12 and 14 involve important arrivals as well, briefly tonicizing the key of the Neapolitan.

This regular pattern of essential tonal arrivals, combined with melodic agogic accents, invites the listener to hear the even-numbered measures as strong. However, I hear m. 7 as strong because of its forte and stretto markings. Likewise, m. 15 is given additional stress following the fermata as a result of the a tempo indication. Since the overall pattern of weak-strong metric organization has been so firmly established in both the antecedent and consequent phrases, we experience the downbeats of mm. 7 and 15 as structural syncopation. This suggests that while the

Example 2.15: Mazurka, A section: harmonic scheme of the *période*, mm. 1-16
metrical and hypermetrical layout is obvious, there are other kinds of accentuation and patterning that play off the regular grid. Odd measures will carry metrical and hypermetrical stress, because they initiate the larger groups of measures. The even-numbered measures, however, involve agogically accented melodic notes and harmonic goals that create expressive accents. Example 2.16 examines more closely the opening section’s shape of the rhythmic form, as a result of these accents.

When shaping the opening A section of the Mazurka, the first concern of the pianist should be to maintain the musical flow as a single unit without minimizing the salience of the smaller groups. Each of the phrases within this periodic structure involves a length of eight measures. Likewise, each phrase can be grouped into four 2-bar units, two 4-bar units, or an entire 8-bar unit. As Example 2.16 illustrates, the grouping boundaries are symmetrical according to tonal, thematic, and dynamic criteria.

The prevailing pattern of weak-strong bar groupings is disrupted in mm. 7 and 15. This jarring change interferes with the trajectory of the established accentual pattern, creating strong stresses where we are expecting weak ones; thus causing syncopation. Lussy’s theory tells us that such a change will cause the performer to react expressively, and depending on the treatment of the passage, allow the performer to display a different plan of pacing. On the one hand, by lengthening the fermata, a performer can create a long enough sense of breath that the syncopation is weakened. On the other hand, the chromatic voice leading in the soprano (♭2-♯7) needs to resolve in order to conclude the phrase. Rubinstein places a very small crescendo through m. 15, slightly stressing the downbeat of m. 16. This helps maintain the music’s temporality of weak-strong metric organization, specifically when repeating the A section or moving forward to the B section. It is only in the da capo repetition that he acknowledges the
a. Measures 1-8

Example 2.16: Mazurka, A section: degrees of accentuation at the 2-, 4-, and 8-bar levels of the *période*, mm. 1-16
downbeat of m. 15 as a stronger stress than the downbeat of m. 16. This allows the sorrowfully imploring motive of m. 15 to fade into interminable silence, ending the dance.

**Rhythmic and Tonal Implications in the Second Part of the A section, mm. 17-32 and in the B section, mm. 33-56**

Like the A section’s opening theme, mm. 17-32 involve two 8-bar phrases, in which agogic accents fall, at first, on the even-numbered measures. As the arrows in Example 2.17(a) reveal, the accentual pattern is undermined beginning in m. 21. In mm. 17-20, the melodic agogic accents combined with the bass motion and the alteration of harmonic dissonance and resolution, continue to project the pattern of weak-strong metric organization so firmly established in the a¹ section (mm. 1-16).

Beginning in m. 21, Chopin initiates a sequential progression that leads from b⁰ to f⁸ for the beginning of the reprise in m. 25. As Example 2.17(b) demonstrates, the outer voices of the passage move in parallel tenths with equal emphasis on successive downbeats. This change of accentuation affects the overall pattern of directed motion within the phrase and at the beginning of the a² section (m. 25), as shown with the degrees of accentuation at the 2-, 4-, and 8-bar levels in Example 2.18.

As Laufer’s analysis indicates, an imperfect authentic cadence in the key of the subdominant (m. 25) is the goal of tonal motion in the b section. Laufer’s graph suggests that the phrase has been extended beyond its basic length not only because it generates a strong cadence but also because it allows the prolongational span of ⁵—from the initial note of the Urlinie—to proceed to its upper neighbor ⁶ on the downbeat of m. 25 (see Example 2.5). This is further reinforced with the parallel tenth motion in the outer voices that begins on the downbeat of m. 21 and continues through the downbeat of m. 25. The symmetrical phrase rhythm established in the
a. Agogic accents in the b section, mm. 16-25

b. Harmonic reduction of the bridge’s b section, mm. 17-25

Example 2.17: Mazurka, A section: accentuations caused by agogic accents in the bridge’s b section, mm. 16-25
a\textsuperscript{1} section is now threatened because of this elided cadence. It creates a phrase extension that produces an irregular grouping of five measures rather than four (see Example 2.18). Lastly, by avoiding the expected half-cadence in the key of the tonic, and by briefly tonicizing the key of the subdominant, Chopin undermines the overall tonal structure, whimsically obscuring the return of the principal theme. Chopin has willfully contradicted the expected harmonic scheme. To maximize this effect, a pianist may consider several options, as discussed below.

Example 2.18: Mazurka, A section: degrees of accentuation at the 2-, 4-, and 8-bar levels of the b section in the bridge, mm. 17-25

While listening to the opening a\textsuperscript{1} section, we are likely to experience the even-numbered measures as hyper-downbeats that define metrical consonance, with m. 15 introducing a mild syncopation.\textsuperscript{105} As the bridge continues to reinforce this pattern, m. 21 conveys an intense metrical dissonance, destabilizing the repetition and creating syncopation. Lussy views syncopation “as a force that destroys the metric accent and thereby threatens the established metric pattern.”\textsuperscript{106} According to Lussy, the “stress that the performer employs in delivering

\textsuperscript{105} Krebs (1999, 2003 and 2004).

\textsuperscript{106} Doğantan (1997, 155).
Syncopation is the manifestation of his inner struggle to retain the regularity of metric accents against this destructive force.”107 Therefore, Lussy would view this moment of rhythmic irregularity as reason to apply a powerful *accent pathétique*. The $b^5$ is a *pathétique* event not only because it distorts the rhythmic pattern but also because it is the highest note of the work thus far and it breaks the contour pattern established in the previous measures. Consequently, Lussy would recognize this moment as a forceful source of *nuance* since its structural components shape the overall flow of the phrase. Lussy would draw attention across the entirety of the passage by a single acceleration/deceleration gesture while accentuating each downbeat, as shown in Example 2.19 (the application of Lussy’s expressive markings are indicated above and

Example 2.19: Mazurka, A section: application of Lussy’s *accents pathétiques* and *nuances*, mm. 16-26

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107 Doğantan (1997, 155).
below the staff or in parentheses). This sudden increase of tempo heightens the effect of the syncopation in this passage, and the additional accents on the downbeats of mm. 22-24 create a sense of grouping within the melodic line.

The intensification of this moment invites a performer to consider at least two other alternatives, as shown in Example 2.20. In Rubinstein’s rendition, he begins an *accelerando* earlier in the phrase and then maintains a fairly strict tempo starting at m. 21, while stressing the high note to allow the $b^5$ to sound syncopated within the established grouping structure.

Similar to Lussy’s suggested application, Rubinstein’s also stresses each of the agogic accents on the downbeats of mm. 21-23. Rubinstein’s choice to begin the acceleration in mm. 19-20 suggests a reaction to the continuous tonal motion created by Chopin’s harmony and voice-leading. In mm. 17-18, Chopin sets up an expectation of an augmented sixth chord resolving to a dominant chord in the key of C minor. The melodic repetition continues in the next 2-bar unit but with a different harmony in m. 20—the G chord is now replaced with a $B^b$ dominant-seventh chord in third inversion. The dissonance in the bass voice—that is, the seventh creates a sense of forward motion, making it harmonically active in its context. Furthermore, the reharmonized setting of m. 19 ($c^5$ to $d^4$) is a surprise. The alto line initiates a chromatic descent that begins in m. 18 and moves through m. 24 ($G-F^\#-F^b-E^b-E-D$), further reinforcing the notion of forward momentum. This creates a sense of impulse that must be released; hence, the acceleration. Ashkenazy, however, displays a different plan of pacing in his 1996 recording. He too accelerates in mm. 19-20 but undermines the syncopation by creating a sense of breath immediately before reaching the peak of the phrase, choosing to stress the high note not with weight but with time.¹⁰⁸ In his rendition, Ashkenazy refuses to stress the downbeats in mm. 21-

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Example 2.20: Mazurka, A section: expressive shaping and pacing in Rubinstein and Ashkenazy’s recorded performances, mm. 16-26
23. Instead, he treats the entire melodic contour as a single, legato phrase—as Chopin has indicated with his slur mark—accentuating the smoothness of the melodic line. Contradicting Lussy, neither Rubinstein nor Ashkenazy accelerates at the high point of the passage or decelerates as the phrase reaches its end.

The shift of emphasis to odd-numbered measures in the b section (mm. 17-24) creates a conflict with the return of the principal theme at the beginning of the a\(^2\) section (m. 25). Since mm. 9-16 and 25-32 are parallel (except that the f\(^5\) in m. 25 is now given consonant support), the weak-strong hypermetric organization that was securely established in the a\(^1\) section will continue in the b section. The projection of the hypermetrical dissonance in m. 21, however, prevails through m. 25, making the beginning of the reprise as a metrically strong event. As the phrase unfolds, this creates a sense of conflict given that the agogic accents in the even-numbered measures override the odd-numbered measures. Even more so, the tonic harmony does not return until m. 26, leaving the listener to wonder about the importance of the elided cadence in m. 25. As Example 2.21 illustrates, one possible way of handling this dilemma is to consider lengthening the first beat of m. 25 with a tenuto to articulate the beginning of the new 8-bar group (rather than stressing it dynamically), then playing the second and third beats slightly faster, and finally stressing the downbeat of m. 26 while decelerating into beats two and three.

Example 2.21: Mazurka, A section: expressive shaping for the return of the principal theme, mm. 21-26
Note that this reading continues the *rallentando* from the sequential passage through the downbeat of m. 25.

In the opening phrases of the B section (mm. 33-40), Chopin continues the weak-strong metric organization at the 2-bar level. Note that its periodic structure is truncated (see Example 2.8). The antecedent and consequent phrases are four measures each, with the consequent phrase (mm. 37-40) functioning as a rhythmic variation of the antecedent phrase (mm. 33-36). These two phrases resemble chamber music in that each voice is similar to a melody played on a stringed or wind instrument, requiring its own individual expressive shaping. The bass line, for the first time in the Mazurka, involves a single, *legato* melodic line that demands sensitive treatment. Each three consecutive quarter notes are slurred together, initially as an ascending gesture (D-E-A) in mm. 33-34, then as circular descending motion (E-A-D) in mm. 34-35. These three-note motives are stated three times with each impulse beginning on the third beat of each measure. While a singing *legato* touch is needed throughout the passage in the bass line, a slight *non-legato* touch is used for the upper voices in the treble staff. Moreover, the beginning of each slurred group in each staff accentuates different beats of the measures (beat one for the treble staff and beat three for the bass). To further enhance the polyphony in this section, Chopin notates a *legato* slurring in the bass against a *portato* articulation in the treble in mm. 37-40, as shown in Example 2.22. The challenge for the pianist is in achieving evenness and a perfect coupling of the hands while maintaining rhythmic precision. The performer must be careful to show that the left-hand entrances on the third beats of the measures are not downbeats. One possibility of interpreting this passage smoothly is to create a *decrescendo/crescendo* pairing that directs the energy of each motive to its final note, accentuating beat two rather than beat three in each measure. At the 2-bar level, we can increase the dynamic level slightly so the
Example 2.22: Mazurka, B section: expressive shaping and articulation in the a\textsuperscript{1} section, mm. 32-40

left-hand motive that leads into the even-numbered measures generates more energy than the one that leads into the odd-numbered measures. Simultaneously, Lussy would advise the performer to add a slight accent métrique in the soprano voice at the beginning of each 2-bar unit, creating an impulse that sets the unit in motion. Chopin’s accent markings on the third beats of m. 37 and m. 39, however, reinforce the playful feeling of the scherzando and may undermine the accents métiques. Still, in my own playing, I emphasize the accents métiques more emphatically. This allows the melodic line to rise to a more intense declamation, producing a discordant expression rather than lyrical. A stronger stress—an accent pathétique—would occur on the longer notes of
the even-numbered measures. By directing all the voices dynamically to beat two of the even-numbered measures, we can convey a very clear grouping structure that is no longer undermined by Chopin’s independent slurring marks, similar to Ashkenazy’s rendition. Note that the same dynamic contrast at the 2-bar level (the *rythme*) can be replicated at the 4-bar level (the *hemistiche*).

In his article “Beyond the Dance,” Adrian Thomas describes the traditional folk ensemble of central Poland as follows:

. . . a melody instrument (the violin played in first position on the upper strings, or the *fujarka*, a high-pitched shepherds’ pipe) plus an instrument or two to provide a drone (lower open strings on the violin, or the *dudy* or *gajdy*, a Polish bagpipe) and/or a rhythmic pulse (the *basetla* or *basy*, a string bass played unstopped).  

Such a texture occurs in the F♯ minor passage of the B section, mm. 41-48. Here, Chopin sets in motion a trajectory that articulates a pattern that is governed by a strong-weak metric organization, accentuating the odd-numbered measures for the first time in the Mazurka. The persistent open fifth drone over a pedal point produces an impulse that sets each 2-bar *rythme* in motion, emphasizing 4-bar units. Chopin’s accent markings, however, complicate the matter by suggesting a different segmentation. An accent mark is notated on the downbeats of mm. 42, 44, and 46 in the tenor voice (c♯⁴), and *sforzando* markings are notated on the second and third beats of m. 44, followed by a *ritenuto* marking in mm. 47-48. These stresses weaken the strong-weak metric pattern produced by the open fifth drone, invoking end-accented rather than beginning-accented *rythmes*. In Rubinstein’s rendition, he reinforces the end-accented *rythmes* by adding a *crescendo* in each 2-bar unit, reaching the climax of the phrase at the end of the second *rythme* (m. 44), as illustrated in Example 2.23. In this passage, as a result of the doublings between the

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Example 2.23: Mazurka, B section: tempo and dynamic variations in Rubinstein’s performance, mm. 41-49

soprano and tenor voices, a pianist will certainly have a choice on which voice to bring out more emphatically. Chopin’s accent markings specifically located above the tenor line and not above the soprano line, are inviting the pianist to experiment with various ways of voicing this passage, in which the tenor line may at times override the soprano line.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I discussed several issues that pertain to creating an expressive performance in Chopin’s Mazurka in A minor, Op. 7, no. 2. The analysis noted that Chopin articulates a pattern that is governed by a weak-strong metric organization throughout the A
section and for most of the B section. The agogic accents on the even-numbered measures work against the odd-numbered measures, which initiate the larger bar groupings. The performer should take special care to accentuate the subtle play between and across the groupings of these structures. In mm. 13-16, Chopin does not end the passage with a continuation of the same established pattern. Instead, he interrupts the phrase with a fermata that introduces an a tempo stress on an odd-numbered measure. By breaking the accentual pattern, Chopin creates a mild syncopation that sets in motion a new trajectory and creates an uncertainty. Measures 21-25 initiate a sequential pattern that impedes the weak-strong metric organization that has largely prevailed up to that point, projecting a strong metric dissonance. Moreover, it does not lead to an anticipated half-cadence. Instead, it is composed of an apparent elision that briefly tonicizes the subdominant in m. 25, reintroducing the principal theme with its non-tonic chord. In the B section, Chopin notates independent, opposing legato slurs in each staff, whose beginnings emphasize different beats within the same measures. Finally, in mm. 41-48 a change of phrase rhythm occurs through the use of an open fifth drone and pedal-point that appears to alter the weak-strong metric organization that prevails throughout most of the Mazurka. Chopin’s expressive markings, however, conflict with this reading, demonstrating a variety of levels of hierarchical grouping structure that might be expressed in performance.

To conclude the ternary structure of the Mazurka, Chopin returns to its opening periodic structure (mm. 1-16). The da capo serves as an opportunity to summarize many of the Mazurka’s essential features. It is here where performers should use their creative license to highlight and intensify many of the tonal and rhythmic connections discussed in the analysis. To produce a temporally coherent and convincing rendition of the work, a broader tempo should be applied in order to make the final restatement the most dramatic musical gesture in the Mazurka. The da
capo must counteract the drive of the contrasting middle section and to gradually decrease all of the music’s inherent tensions.
CHAPTER THREE
CHOPIN PRELUDE OP. 28, NO. 17 IN A♭ MAJOR

Introduction

In his discussion of hypermeasures in Romantic music, Edward T. Cone contends that hypermeasures “are often irresistibly drawn into a regular four-measure pattern.” And as a result of this mundane arrangement, Cone resolves, “it is here . . . [in Romantic music] that we can justly speak of the tyranny of the four-measure phrase.”\(^\text{110}\) For Cone, “The composer who really absorbed, digested, assimilated, and nourished himself on the four-measure concept was Chopin.”\(^\text{111}\) While many of Chopin’s compositions, according to Cone, are quite conspicuous in their regularity at higher metric levels, other compositions by Chopin, however, “exhibit the same pattern firmly in control, yet concealed with a subtlety that mitigates the hypermeter without violating it.”\(^\text{112}\) We have already seen examples of seemingly simple successions of 2-bar, 4-bar, and 8-bar groups revealing extraordinary complexity and subtlety. Another sophisticated treatment of concealing the prevailing 4-bar phrase with subtle deviations can be found in the two sequential episodes of Chopin’s Prelude Op. 28, no. 17 in A♭ major, and herein lies potential for an effective and expressive performance.

Aside from the hypermetrical disturbances, other issues that are potentially problematic to a performer studying this work concern the three radically different presentations of the principal theme that make up the Prelude’s rondo-like structure. The pianist’s most immediate challenge in understanding this small form is in controlling the varied repetitions of the principal

\(^{110}\) Cone (1968, 79).

\(^{111}\) Ibid. (80).

\(^{112}\) Ibid.
theme while projecting the nuances that make them independent of one another. A further challenge for the performer of this Prelude lies in the local events of the two sequential episodes. Unlike the three statements of the principal theme, they are not varied repetitions of the same music. Each sequential episode involves different music. That is, they contrast not only with the principal theme, but also with each other. The aim of this chapter is to explore the various similarities and differences between the statements of the principal theme, and between the two contrasting sequential episodes, in order to present the performer with interpretative decisions concerning the many local features of each section. Subsequently, the chapter addresses how the sections relate to one another and some ways to project such relationships. As with previous chapters, I discuss analytical and expressive issues concerning choices a performer will need to make to create an expressive and convincing interpretation based on Lussy’s theory.

**Analysis**

The Prelude’s formal structure is a rondo involving five sections and a coda (A¹ B¹ A² B² A³ and coda). The work begins with a two-bar introduction and concludes with a seven-bar coda. The beautiful song-like quality of the Prelude oscillates between the harmonically uncomplicated statements of the principal theme in A♭ major and more agitated and unruly harmonies in the contrasting episodes. Throughout the Prelude, however, each section maintains a similar chordal accompanimental texture. Example 3.1 charts the rondo form and its main key areas. The analysis begins with a brief discussion addressing significant differences between the three statements of the principal theme. Each time the principal theme occurs, Chopin indicates a new dynamic marking. The manner in which Chopin distributes the notes between the hands demonstrates that his thinking was guided by procedures of voice-leading and polyphony. In
<table>
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<th>B²</th>
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<td>Phrase groupings</td>
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<td>14 + 8</td>
<td>8 + 12</td>
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Example 3.1: Chopin, Prelude No. 17: outline of the form

performing this Prelude, it is essential that Chopin’s dynamic markings and independent voices be distinctly realized in all three occurrences of the A sections. The first four measures of each A section are reproduced in Example 3.2.

In the opening A¹ section (mm. 3-18), Chopin introduces a parallel periodic structure that involves a half cadence in m. 10 and a perfect authentic cadence in m. 18. The section begins softly and eventually reaches a *forte* climax at the beginning of the consequent phrase (m. 11). Although no further dynamic markings are indicated within this section, a performer, ultimately, will have a choice on how to end the section—either to continue with a *forte* dynamic or to judiciously pace a *decrescendo* near the end of the section. If a *decrescendo* were desired, then where?

Considering that the symmetry of Chopin’s rhythmic grouping in the A¹ section is consistent throughout—the *incises* are occurring at the 2-levels, the *rythmes* at the 4-bar levels,
a. A¹ section, mm. 3-6

Example 3.2: Chopin, Prelude: the dynamic markings for the first four measures of each A section

the hemistiches at the 8-bar levels, and the période at the 16-bar level—then we can consider shaping the dynamics in accordance with the smallest groupings, the incises. Rothstein refers to the shape of each 2-bar unit in the Prelude as “Ur-rhythm [which] consists of an upbeat, or
anacrusis, consisting of five eighth notes, starting just after the downbeat of one measure and leading to the downbeat of the next.”

However, Chopin does not treat the end of each *incise* in the same manner, as shown in Example 3.3.

Example 3.3: Prelude, A¹ section: dynamic phrasing and tempo variations in the consequent phrase of the A section, mm. 11-18

Measure 12 resolves a dissonant *appoggiatura* figure down by step while mm. 14 and 16 resolve a consonant figure up by step. Additionally, Chopin sustains the final note of the *incises* in mm. 14 and 16 with ties, creating a dissonance on their subsequent downbeats. As a result of the tension these rhythmic figures generate, Lussy would recommend greater force on the final note.

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113 Rothstein (2005, 6).
note of each *incise*. In the consequent phrase (mm. 11-18), I find the second *incise* to be the most expressive since its beginning involves the highest note of the phrase (\( b^5 \) in m. 13) and because of the startling harmonic retrogression (\( V^7 \) followed by IV) in m. 14. Following Lussy’s ideas, the ascending endings of the second and third *incises* intensify the drama and should require a *crescendo/accelerando* pairing. The final *incise* in mm. 17-18 creates a descending contour leading to the cadence———Lussy, I believe, would advise a *decrescendo*. He states, “There must be a *decrescendo*, and a diminution of sonority and vehemence in descending passages.”114 A *diminuendo* and a *rallentando* would seem quite appropriate in the final *incise* of the section, in order to convey a strong sense of closure.

In Martha Argerich’s performance of this Prelude,115 it is quite remarkable how her tempo variations concur so meticulously with Lussy’s prescriptions. Argerich maintains a fairly steady metrical state throughout the consequent phrase until its penultimate measure, where she introduces an exaggerated *rallentando*. Furthermore, Argerich does not reach the *forte* dynamic level until the second beat of m. 14, disregarding Chopin’s marking in m. 11. This interpretation makes the second *incise* (mm. 13-14) the most dynamic. Another parallel with Lussy is that Argerich treats each succeeding *incise* more softly, ending the section quietly. For the sake of creating an even a stronger sense of closure, Rothstein, in his analysis of this Prelude, recommends treating the repeated chords of m. 18 as an ending rather than an upbeat to the next section, as Example 3.3 implies. He explains, “I continue and even augment my cadential ritard into the first beat of m. 19—making this, in my performance, one of the slowest moments in the

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114 Lussy (1885).

Of course, an alternative would be to place a caesura before the second eight-note in m. 18 and then proceed with an *accelerando* to the downbeat of m. 19. This would give the beginning of the first episode a sense of urgency, initiating a greater force of energy. This recommendation applies to my own interpretation of the passage.

A significant feature of the Prelude’s melody is that longer rhythmic values occur regularly on the even-numbered measures throughout the principal theme, creating a sense of syncopation within the hypermetrical structure. Example 3.4 reveals the surface-level and hypermetric-level accentuations of the first eight measures (mm. 3-10) of the antecedent phrase. Note that the first two measures of the Prelude function as a 2-bar anacrustic figuration to the first hypermetric downbeat (m. 3).

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**Example 3.4: Prelude, A^1 section: degrees of accentuation at the 1-, 2-, and 4-bar levels, mm. 3-10**

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Rothstein refers to introductory measures that precede the first hypermetric downbeat as “elongated upbeats . . . [that] are not counted as part of any hypermeasure.”\footnote{Rothstein (1989, 56).} Lussy, however, would hear the first beat of m. 1 as initial ictus since it is a point of initiation that propels the beginning of the Prelude forward. Nevertheless, the first complete phrase of the Prelude’s principal theme encompasses eight measures. Although its 4-bar rythme (mm. 3-6), or hypermeasure, securely establishes a pattern of weak-strong-weak-strong, according to Krebs, “hypermeasures must begin with a strong beat and end with a weak beat.”\footnote{Krebs (2005, 19).} Chopin, I believe, defies this rule.

After the 2-bar introduction, $d^4$ produces a strong stress against the $e^2$ in the bass on the downbeat. As shown in Example 3.5, the true soprano voice does not enter until the second eighth note of m. 3. One should experiment with various ways to project the voice leading strands shown here on separate staves: I prefer to connect $c^4$ to $d^4$, rather than joining $e^4$ (the apparent top voice) to $d^4$, as would be more conventional in a part-writing exercise. This may seem arbitrary at first providing that Chopin interlocks the hands, blurring the voice leading. When notated on multiple staves, however, the identity of the lines becomes clear. It is only in retrospect that a listener will understand the delightful ambiguity of the first harmony’s function.

Chopin immediately destabilizes $A^b$ in m. 4 by placing $G^b$ in the alto voice—creating a dominant-seventh sonority that initiates a tonicization of $D^b$. This produces the Prelude’s first dominant to tonic resolution, only not in the tonic key. The subdominant chord ($D^b$) is briefly tonicized in mm. 4-5, providing a stress on the third beat of the hypermeasure, and reinforced in m. 6, as shown in Example 3.6.
Example 3.5: Prelude, A¹ section: illustration of the texture and voice leading, mm. 1-3
Example 3.6: Prelude, A\textsuperscript{1} section: degrees of accentuation at the 1-, 2-, and 4-bar levels, and voice-leading sketch of the antecedent phrase, mm. 3-10

Rothstein hears each 2-bar grouping—that is, the \textit{incises}—conveying an articulation of weak-strong. Similarly, each 4-bar grouping, or \textit{rythme}, continues the identical pattern: weak-strong-weak-strong. But the initial \textit{ictus}, regardless if we hear it in m. 1 or in m. 3, trumps the agogic accents in the even-numbered measures, as shown at the 1-, 2-, and 4-bar levels in Example 3.6. For Lussy, the lowest in his hierarchy of accents are the \textit{accents métriques}, while the \textit{accents rythmiques} and \textit{ictus} are next in importance. But the most independent and highest amongst them are the \textit{accents pathétiques}. Therefore, the agogic accents in the even-numbered measures receive \textit{accents pathétiques}, undermining all other metrical and rhythmical accents. By following this design we create an accentual pattern of weak-strong-weak-strong. This produces, however, a resulting monotony that dismisses the initial \textit{ictus}. Rather than playing an unbroken succession of weak and strong bars, which might become a bit too predictable, players should
experiment with ways to enliven the music by applying *accents pathétiques* at various points—such as the second beat of m. 6—and allowing these moments to challenge the rhythmic and metrical irregularity. Consider combining successions of weak-strong and strong-weak. In my own playing, I articulate the initial *ictus* in m. 3 by stressing only on the low $e_f$ followed by a slight *crescendo* in the melody to the downbeat of m. 4. This allows for successive stresses to occur on two consecutive downbeats, but in two different voices. The initial *ictus* in m. 3 receives a demarcation as a result of its low bass entry while the melody in m. 4 receives an *accent pathétique*, as a result of its longer duration (see Example 3.7). Furthermore, the falling-fifth sequence in mm. 8-10 will now receive a stress only at its beginning and ending, destroying the pattern of alternation as articulated in Example 3.6.

These various dimensions of articulation are emphasized in each of the principal theme’s restatements, supporting the notion of syncopated *rythmes* (or hypermeasures), considering that the theme begins in m. 3 on a dynamically weak bar. The first downbeat in the $A^2$ section carries a strong dynamic accent, which supports the notion of the initial *ictus* in m. 3 (see Example 3.2, b). And the first downbeat in the $A^3$ section is heard over a tonic pedal harmony, reinforced with a *sforzando* marking (see Example 3.2, c). As noted above, Chopin’s agogic accents in the even-numbered measures, however, create an accentual pattern that stresses the weaker beats of each *rythme*, thus creating syncopation within each statement of the principal theme.

As in Chopin’s Prelude in A Major, Op. 28, no. 7 (see Chapter 1), an expressive performance of this Prelude will not present each of the *incises* in the $A^1$ section in the same manner. Example 3.8 suggests various ways to shape the timing and dynamic of each *incise*. In order to determine how to create a coherent and expressive progression for the section as a
Example 3.7: Prelude, A\textsuperscript{1} section: a second option for degrees of accentuation at the 1-, 2-, and 4-bar levels, and voice-leading sketch of the antecedent phrase, mm. 3-10

whole, it is crucial for performers to consider such possibilities. Experiment with performing the alternatives shown in Example 3.8.

In Example 3.8(a), the energy flows from a point of initiation, gently slowing as the *incise* reaches its completion. A second possibility is to shape our performance by accelerating into the second beat of m. 1, then slowing through the remainder of the *incise*, as shown in Example 3.8(b). The middle-accented incise, Example 3.8(c), creates an acceleration to the downbeat of the second measure followed by a slight *rallentando*. And finally, Example 3.8(d), the end of the *incise* is the goal towards which the energy is directed. Again, one should experiment with each of these possibilities in varied combinations. Some combinations will be more effective than others; a thoughtful performer should be able to invent further alternatives.
While the beginning-accented *incises* (Examples 3.8, a and b) are legitimate choices, it is
the middle- and end-accented *incises* that are inherently implicit in the music. A phrase such as
the Prelude’s principal theme exhibits a tendency toward continuous forward motion.
Melodically, the theme feels as if it has arrived in m. 4, with $b^4$ resolving to $a^4$. As noted above,
Chopin creates a certain ambiguity by turning the expected $A^b$ tonic chord in m. 4 into a
dominant sonority that continues to push forward. This gives the Prelude a sense of continuous
melodic fluidity, especially since the only authentic cadence in the tonic key does not occur until
the very end of the principal theme’s 16-bar *période*.

As a result of this tonal uncertainty, a performer can consider alternative ways of pacing
each hypermeasure in this opening section. For instance, within the first hypermeasure (mm. 3-6)
a change of bass occurs once per measure, excluding m. 6, where it occurs twice; see the voice-leading sketch in Example 3.7. Chopin accelerates the harmonic rhythm in the second hypermeasure (mm. 7-10) so that the second and third hyperbeats involve two different bass notes. The faster harmonic rhythm increases the effect of forward motion in the second hypermeasure, almost demanding an acceleration because of its fifth-related motion. As shown in Example 3.9, the first incise (mm. 3-4) suggests an accelerando followed by an a tempo, while the last incise invites an accelerando followed by a rallentando. The second and third incises produce the greatest forward momentum of the phrase as result of their final notes, as mentioned earlier. Thus, the first hypermeasure calls for a slight accelerando, leading to a slight caesura; mm. 5-6 might be played with somewhat greater urgency. Lussy, I believe, would certainly recommend that because the added bass notes in mm. 8-9 create additional chromaticism and dissonance—that is, rich harmonies that call for accents pathétiques. Moreover, as mentioned earlier, the falling-fifth sequence creates a momentum that impedes a caesura-like breath in m. 9; thus, creating motion that connects the third and fourth incises. As the hypermeasure reaches its end, a ritardando is indicated only to counterbalance the increased forward momentum. This balancing an action with a counter-action is essential to Lussy’s theory. For Lussy, “It is not sufficient that the music has written into it an action; it must also incorporate its counterpart.”\textsuperscript{119}

Obviously there are difficult decisions to be made in interpreting this passage; however, a sensitive performer should experiment with alternative articulations.

As in many rondos, the second occurrence of the principal theme, the A\textsuperscript{2} section (mm. 35-42), involves only a partial statement. In this section, Chopin repeats only the antecedent phrase, ending on a half cadence. As noted earlier, Chopin increases the dynamic markings to

\textsuperscript{119} Green (1994, 205).
Example 3.9: Prelude, A\textsuperscript{1} section: variations of tempo in the antecedent phrase, mm. 3-10

\textit{fortissimo}, thickens the texture of the accompanimental chords, and adds low bass notes (see Example 3.10). Chopin does not indicate any further dynamic markings following the \textit{fortissimo} in m. 35. Consequently, a performer will need to decide whether this section should remain at a constant dynamic level. Since this statement of the theme is contracted, it would be entirely possible to maintain the \textit{fortissimo} throughout the section so that there is an abrupt change of volume beginning with the next section. This approach is quite effective and logical. However, another desirable approach would be to imitate similar steps we took in the first A\textsuperscript{1} section, by organizing and shaping the dynamics in relation to each of the \textit{incises}, as shown in Example 3.10. Once again, the first two incises increase in dynamic level, with the peak of the phrase achieved in the second \textit{incise}, as a result of its highest notes. A \textit{rallentando} is marked only at the
Example 3.10: Prelude, $A^2$ section: dynamic phrasing and tempo variation, mm. 35-42

penultimate measure of the phrase, to provide a satisfying and definite conclusion. For Lussy, “The most common *rallentando* is that at the end of . . . expressive phrases.\(^{120}\)

In the final part of the Prelude, Chopin creates a remarkably striking and intense melodic and harmonic expansion of the expected structural tonic chord. The third and final statement of the theme, $A^3$ (mm. 65-84), is marked *sotto voce* and *pianissimo*, played over a tonic pedal. Each of the eleven times the resounding low $A_b$ is heard (ten times during $A^3$ and one time in the

\(^{120}\) Lussy (1885, 186).
coda), Chopin marks it with a *sforzando* accent. Thus far in the Prelude, Chopin pointedly avoided sounding a tonic chord on a hypermetric downbeat. Once it is introduced, the tonic prevails through the end of the Prelude. This suggests that the A♭ pitch in the bass in m. 65 is in fact the final note of the *Bassbrechung*. However, the final tone of the *Urlinie* does not occur until the downbeat of m. 84.

This unusual design is quite similar to the ending of Bach’s Prelude in C major from the first book of his *Well-Tempered Clavier*. In *Fünf Urlinie-Tafeln*, Schenker noted an essential feature of this composition is that when the final tone of the *Bassbrechung* appears, it initially supports V⁷ of IV—thus avoiding the structural tonic triad—and it begins a 4-bar cadential extension.¹²¹ The *Urlinie*, according to Schenker’s graph, does not descend to ♯ until the final measure of the piece, as shown in Example 3.11.

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Example 3.11: Bach Prelude, C major, *WTC* Book I: adaptation of Schenker’s graph from *Fünf Urlinie-Tafeln*, mm. 32-35

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¹²¹ Schenker (1933 [1969], 37).
Achieving tonic arrival in the bass, while delaying its arrival in the melody, intensifies the drama and produces a sense of tension and distance as a result of the conflict between harmonic and melodic forces. A performer can accentuate this conflict by providing a sense of breath immediately following each sforzando bass note along with a progressively paced deceleration through both the antecedent and consequent phrases. For Lussy, a breath along with the sforzando marking would be acceptable since he considers all pedal tones as “discords . . . [that must be] imposed upon the ear by force.” Furthermore, Lussy would argue that a rallentando is necessary for the entire passage because it involves pedal-point.

Chopin lengthens the consequent phrase of A\(^3\) with a 4-bar extension that incorporates modal mixture, introducing the minor subdominant. The enharmonic equivalent of the pitch F\(_b\) has already been introduced as a key area in both episodes, and its appearance now activates a sense of remembrance from these earlier sections. When the melody from m. 79 was first introduced in the A\(^1\) section, it was supported with a dominant harmony (m. 17). In m. 79, Chopin reharmonizes the melody so that it now is supported with a D\(_b\) minor chord. For Lussy, this reharmonized melody demands a rallentando because it shifted from a major harmonization to a minor one.

Argerich, in her performance of this Prelude, drastically changes the tempo in this final section. She begins the Prelude at approximately \(\textbf{♩} = 88\). At the beginning of the A\(^3\) section, she is at roughly \(\textbf{♩} = 66\), and continues to slow in the manner described above. As Lussy would

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122 Lussy (1885, 160).
123 Ibid. (193).
124 Ibid. (186).

96
a. Phrasing and tempo variation in the first episode, mm. 19-24

Example 3.12:
Prelude, first and second episodes: reduction of essential voices in the opening *rythmes* of each episode, including dynamics and tempo variations
(Example 3.12 continued)

c. Dynamic and tempo variations in the second episode, mm. 43-51

d. Reduction of essential voices in the second episode, mm. 43-51
suggest, Argerich projects the intensification of the modal mixture (mm. 79-84) by slowing the
tempo even further, making this passage one of the slowest moments in her performance. While
most performers try to keep a consistent tempo throughout the Prelude, the slower tempo at the
final section creates a dramatic and desirable effect.

The sequential episodes, as mentioned earlier, provide a necessary contrast to the opening
A sections, as well as with each other. Though there are striking differences between the
episodes, let us first examine the similarities between them. First, the piano texture remains
relatively consistent throughout the Prelude, and both episodes maintain similar rhythms but with
more active polyphonic lines in the inner voices. Note that the added tones of the tenor line in
mm. 19-24 are chord fillers—that is, they generate a voice that regularly doubles the baritone
line at the octave, reinforcing the sonority without creating the effect of an independent voice.

As the highest voice, and consequently most exposed, the soprano carries the main
melody. In my own playing of this passage, however, I treat the baritone line as an
interdependent counter-melody that has its own identity and character, equally important to the
soprano voice. The rising stepwise motion in the baritone provides an additional, and beautiful,
melodic quality to the texture that needs to be brought out (see Example 3.12). Lussy would
recommend accelerating through the baritone’s ascending line, since it enters on an offbeat,
creating a “syncopated structure.”

Example 3.12 provides a reduction of the opening passage
of both episodes, including dynamic and tempo variation. An *accelerando* is suggested in the
second measure of each *rythme* (mm. 20 and 22) by emphasizing and accelerating through the
tenor line. The plan of pacing in Example 3.12(c) creates a 2-bar gesture of acceleration and
deceleration in the middle of each *rythme.*

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126 Lussy (1885, 177).
A second similarity between the episodes is that they both begin with a common-tone connection. The main connecting element—that is, the common tone—occurs in the soprano in first episode (see Example 3.13) and in the bass in the second episode (see Example 3.14). Both progressions create a surprising effect and involve root movement down by major third. The common tone at the beginning of the first episode is $A_b/G\#$, moving from the tonic I chord to a secondary $V^7$ of the Neapolitan. At the beginning of the second episode, the connecting tone is

a. Common-tone connection accelerating into the first episode, mm. 17-20

![Example 3.13: Prelude, first episode: common-tone connection](image)

b. Common-tone connection decelerating into the first episode, mm. 17-20

![Example 3.13: Prelude, first episode: common-tone connection](image)
a. Common-tone connection accelerating into the second episode, mm. 41-44

b. Common-tone connection decelerating into the second episode, mm. 41-44

Example 3.14: Prelude, second episode: common-tone connection

\[
\text{Eb}/D#, \text{ moving from the V of the tonic key to a secondary V}^7 \text{ of the } bVI. \text{ If the last measure of the A}^2 \text{ section is heard as strong, and the first measure of the second episode weak, the concept of Schenker’s 5-6 technique may seem appropriate (the 5-6 technique are oscillations of intervals of 5-6 between the outer voices that avoid parallelisms). In Schenkerian theory, “the 6ths normally}
\]
appear on weaker beats than the 5ths."\textsuperscript{127} This reading coincides well with Lerdahl and Jackendoff’s Grouping Preference Rule 2a. They explain that when a note is repeated in a rhythmic pattern of long-short, the longer note “may be heard as a boundary between one group ending . . . and one beginning.”\textsuperscript{128} This would suggest that the A\textsuperscript{2} section may call for a decrease of volume, as discussed earlier, but not softer than the beginning of the second episode.

As discussed earlier, at least two possibilities of pacing exist when beginning the episodes. The first type places a breath immediately following the arrival of the tonic chord in m. 18. This allows the succeeding eighth notes in the measure to function as an anacrustic figuration driving into the downbeat of m. 19, as shown in Example 3.13(a). An alternative possibility would be to gradually decelerate through m. 18 so that the downbeat of m. 19 will act as a point of initiation from which the energy flows, as shown in Example 3.13(b). One might consider testing the various interpretations found in Examples 3.13 and 3.14 by adjusting the variables to their own liking.

A third resemblance between the two episodes is the feature of a rising melodic sixth as a distinct interval. In the first episode, the ascending melodic sixth is combined with an extended parallel tenth motion between the soprano and bass in the first statement of the sequence (mm. 19-24), as shown in Example 3.15. This passage functions as a transition from a secondary dominant to a locally tonicized E major chord (m. 24), which is the enharmonic equivalent of the prelude’s bVI. The sequence transfers g\textsuperscript{4} up an octave to g\textsuperscript{5}, by means of ascending diatonic thirds (A major to C# minor to E major). The second episode composes out the melodic interval of a sixth, as shown in Example 3.12(d). Like the opening of the first episode, the second

\textsuperscript{127} Aldwell Schachter, and Cadwallader (2011, 314).

\textsuperscript{128} Lerdahl and Jackendoff (1983, 44-5).
a. Voice-leading reduction of the three 2-bar *incises*, mm. 19-24

b. Voice-leading reduction of the two 4-bar *rythmes*, mm. 43-51

Example 3.15: Prelude, first and second episodes: voice-leading reductions of the ascending melodic sixths, mm. 19-24 and mm. 43-51

transfers $b^4$ up an octave to $b^5$ (mm. 43-51). A striking difference between the episodes, however, is that in the first episode the sequential passage involves three 2-bar *incises* (mm. 19-
24; see Example 3.15, a), whereas in the second episode, the sequence involves a pair of 4-bar rythmes (mm. 43-50; see Example 3.15, b).

Another similarity between the two episodes involves a reversal of melodic contour. In the first episode, the rising tenths in mm. 19-24 are followed by descending tenths in mm. 24-27, reinforcing its harmonic goal—E major, as shown in Example 3.16(a). Chopin increases the

a. Measures 24-27

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{E:} & \quad 1 & \text{bVII} & \text{bVI} & V & 1 \\
\text{mm:} & \quad 24 & 25 & 26 & 27
\end{align*}
\]

b. Voice-leading reduction showing reversal of contour, mm. 19-27

Example 3.16: Prelude, first episode: a descending whole-step progression and parallel tenth motion, mm. 19-27
harmonic rhythm so that the bass line descends chromatically, changing harmonies on each beat rather than each measure. Although this passage involves a chromatic descent, considering only the chords on the downbeat of each measure reveals an overall whole step descent.

For Lussy, this descending harmonic progression calls for a slowing of tempo—that is, a *mouvement passionnel*. Lussy contends that a *rallentando* is quite natural when “descending groups follow . . . ascending ones.”

Even if the sequence were harmonically simpler and more diatonic, an acceleration would undermine the expressivity of the polyphonic texture. Along with the chromatic descent in the bass, each voice conveys a sense of falling motion that creates an unavoidable decrease of velocity. Such internal coherence and motion would certainly be expressed in a sensitive performance.

Example 3.17 provides a voice leading reduction of mm. 51-57. Soprano and bass notes form a succession of descending sixths on the downbeats, while tenths are created on the upbeats. Chopin reverses the melodic contour in m. 51 after reaching the highest note of the passage.

As the melody descends, Chopin creates dominant to-tonic-relations in which the root of each dominant chord descends by semitone—B⁷ to E, B♭⁷ to Eb, and A⁷ to D—before returning to the cadential six-four chord in the key of the dominant (Eb). As a result of the dominant to-tonic-relations, a different approach to pacing is quite possible. By continuing the faster pacing of each 4-bar *rythme*—slowing only in m. 54 where Chopin thickens the texture and breaks the 6-10 sequential pattern—the episode’s accelerated rhythm creates a directional drive that enhances the arrival of the *forte* cadential six-four chord in Eb major on the downbeat of m. 55.

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129 Lussy (1885, 184).
Example 3.17: Prelude, second episode: descending sequential passage, mm. 51-57

The actual harmonic progression in each of the episodes is different: in the first episode a sequence ascends by thirds and descends by step, whereas in the second episode, the sequence ascends by step and descends chromatically. In both episodes, hypermetrical irregularity results from a stretching or contraction of individual units, creating “nonduple large-scale measures.”

A significant nonduple hypermeasure occurs in the middle of the first episode, mm. 24-26. The opening of the first episode continues the principal theme’s dotted half note agogic accents on the even-numbered measures. Although this phrase rhythm is regular throughout the opening A section, as mentioned earlier, Chopin breaks the pattern at the downbeat of m. 26, by failing to produce the expected agogic accent. It is only when Chopin reintroduces the dotted half note agogic accent over a stable harmony that the hypermetric downbeat is restored (m. 27). The grouping structure of the first episode’s initial eight measures does not divide into two equal segments. Instead, Chopin stretches the first grouping into six measures, as the result of the

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130 Krebs (2005, 15).
sequential parallel tenth motion, and contracts the second grouping to three measures, as a result of the avoided agogic accent. Therefore, with m. 24 acting as an elision, the grouping divides into two unequal segments (6 + 3), even though the phrase consists of eight measures. As Cone has revealed, this type of hypermetric irregularity is precisely the kind of sophisticated treatment that indirectly undermines the four-by-four design. And such hypermetric irregularities, according to Krebs, “can become a significant vehicle of musical expression.”\textsuperscript{131} For instance, this hypermetrical irregularity produces a new grouping structure for the remainder of the episode—in mm. 29-34 the odd-numbered measures are strong while the even-numbered measures are weak. Chopin continues this pattern of strong-weak to the downbeat of m. 35—where the \textit{fortissimo} climax coincides with the return of the principal theme. While this bar is understood as a hypermetric downbeat, it is the downbeat of m. 36 that brings the melodic agogic accent along with the resolving tonic chord. This retrospective reversal is very important. The dramatic and dynamically accented tonic chord reestablishes the phrase rhythm of the opening A\textsuperscript{1} section—the syncopated weak-strong metric pattern. A sensitive performance will need to be cognizant of this critical reversal of accentuation.

The second episode begins in m. 43, which further qualifies as an initial ictus—and is further strengthened by the surprising enharmonic reinterpretation (\textit{accent pathétique}). The agogic accents at mm. 46 and 50 are sending one message, but initial \textit{ictūs} in mm. 43 and 47 are asserting another. As mentioned earlier, Chopin ties the downbeats of mm. 45 and 49. This salient feature suggests 4-bar segments more strongly than 2-bar segments, as in the previous episode. Likewise, there is thematic repetition that unmistakably occurs at the 4-bar level and not the 2-bar level—Chopin sequences the motive a step higher (compare mm. 43-46 and mm. 47-

\textsuperscript{131} Krebs (2005, 29).
The parallelism between the two rythmes suggests that the downbeats of mm. 43 and 47 are both hypermetric downbeats—suggesting that m. 51 is also a hypermetric downbeat.

By accelerating the harmonic rhythm to two harmonies per bar and removing the thematic repetition heard in the previous rythmes, the downbeat in m. 51 is another crucial moment. In m. 51, Chopin reaches the highest note of the Prelude (b₅) and begins a reversal of the melodic contour. Its downbeat receives an accent métrique and accent rythmique (creating an initial ictus) since it begins a new grouping (2 + 2 + 2). But more importantly, it also receives an accent pathétique since it is a chromatic pitch and the highest note of the phrase. As a result of these changes, Chopin creates a very strong and distinctive accentual shift on the downbeat of m. 51, correcting the hypermeasures to the normative structure of strong-weak-strong-weak. The remainder of the second episode continues this pattern of segmentation in 4-bar units, excepting only one hypermetrical dissonance—a mini-hypermeasure in mm. 55-56. The harmonic factors contribute the most to the impression that the two measures involve a contraction of the 4-bar unit. Measure 55 is strong because of the unexpected forte cadential six-four sonority that prepares the return of the home key dominant. On the downbeat of m. 57, an Eb pedal is initiated and sustained for eight measures, preparing the return to the tonic key (Ab major), as shown in Example 3.18. For Lussy, “modulations [that] occur at the beginning or end of a rhythm,”¹³² like the rapid, chromatic inflections of m. 51-54, normally indicate an acceleration. Moreover, since the voices in this excerpt move in different directions, Lussy writes that an accelerando should occur “When at the beginning of a rhythm, the melody and the bass move exceptionally, in contrary motion.”¹³³ The accelerando is further reinforced because of the strong accent

¹³² Lussy (1885, 171).

¹³³ Ibid. (174).
Example 3.18: Prelude, second episode and retransition: degrees of accentuation at the surface level, mm. 43-64

*pathétique* on the downbeat of m. 51, as a result of it being chromatically inflected and the highest note of the piece.

When the sequence breaks on the downbeat of m. 54, Chopin thickens the texture by writing augmented sixth chords at the beginning and end of the measure. Lussy affirms that “augmented seconds, fifths, and sixths . . . must all be accented.”\(^{134}\) For Lussy, “the more parts [that is, notes] there are in a passage, the greater must be its sonority.”\(^{135}\) Therefore, unlike previous phrases that have involved *crescendo/accelerando* pairings, m. 54 marks a point in which a decelerando is combined with dynamic intensity. Lastly, the retransitional passage (mm. 57-64) introduces a chromatic inflection C\(\flat\). This modal mixture represents an important event in the Prelude. After an apparent perfect authentic cadence in E\(\flat\) major (m. 57), Chopin destabilizes

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\(^{134}\) Lussy (1885, 146).

\(^{135}\) Ibid. (200).
the key through the play of chromaticism. Normally, a retransitional passage “modulate[s] back to the home key in preparation for the return of some previous opening material.”136 While the home key does return at the beginning of the A^3 section (m. 65), nevertheless, Chopin creates a strong sense of arrival in the dominant key.

Is this passage standing on the dominant? Or is it a progression that allows the key of the dominant to function as a goal? When the key of A♭ major enters in m. 65, we may initially consider it as the subdominant key of E♭ major rather than a tonic key. The tonicized key of the subdominant (D♭ major) was a purely a local function in the opening phrase of the Prelude (mm. 4-6). Chopin’s ambiguous harmonic scheme, however, is allowing the subdominant to take on a role of structural importance, entering it into large-scale connections. Modulations to the subdominant in a major piece can be mystifying. According to Aldwell, Schachter, and Cadwallader, “Composers have generally avoided modulating to IV early on [in a piece] . . . This is because the tonic in major is also the V of IV; too much emphasis on IV as a ‘key’ can upset our sense of tonality, making us hear IV as I and I as V.”137 Therefore, a most striking feature of this Prelude is the functional ambivalence caused by the juxtaposition of tonic and subdominant key areas. If performers consider the subdominant as a key at the opening of the final refrain, then their response to the musical surface will certainly change. One obvious reaction is to feel a slight weakening of energy, producing a stronger sense of tempo variation, rather than momentum building from the natural tension of a dominant desiring to resolve to its tonic.

The final refrain is far more definitive and structurally significant than its previous counterparts. Whereas in the opening A^1 section, the tonic triad did not appear until its closing


137 Aldwell, Schachter, and Cadwallader (2011, 504).
cadence, in the final refrain, the low $\text{Ab}s$ are saturating and dominating the section. For instance, an interesting feature at the start of the final refrain (m. 65) is that the dissonant $\text{Db}$—functioning as the seventh of the dominant chord— is now absent. While it prevailed at the beginning of both the $A^1$ and $A^2$ sections, Chopin now removes it, as it would cause dissonance with the pedal tone. With its absence, a listener will certainly experience the harmonies ($\text{Ab}$ and $\text{Eb}$) as blurred. This brief harmonic ambiguity will undoubtedly affect how performers will project the passage. If the $\text{Eb}$ harmony is functioning as a dominant, then naturally the shape of the progression will push forward in order to reach its harmonic resolution, thus creating an end-accented *incise*. But if $\text{Ab}$ is functioning as a tonic chord in m. 65, then a slight lingering on the low pedal tone would seem feasible in order to reinforce the arrival of the tonic key, thus producing a beginning-accented *incise*. Such choices need to be assimilated in the process of building an expressive interpretation.

This analytical insight implies that a performer’s awareness of the contextual function of each pedal tone can help determine how to shape this final segment, primarily in regards to the amount of temporal stretching. Unmistakably, the pedal tones accentuate the first and third pulses of each hypermeasure, while the agogic accents continue to pull the *incises* forward with a different type of stress in the even-numbered measures. A pianist, therefore, may choose between feeling the low pedal tones as points of gravitation towards or away from which the music flows. This play of expansion and contraction may cause a slowing of tempo, allowing the final statement to sound more tranquil and distant, as in Argerich’s rendition. If a pianist chooses to normalize the hypermeasure, by allowing the *sforzandos* to create beginning- rather than end-accented *incises*, then the agogic accents will merit less emphasis in dynamics and tempo fluctuation. This is easily accomplished if short caesuras are placed immediately following each
sforzando, as mentioned earlier. If a pianist, however, decides to continue with shaping the
incises as end-accented units, creating a temporal conflict with the sforzandos, the caesura must
be placed right before the low bass notes. Such a rendition causes a dramatically different effect,
generating and sustaining momentum to the final melodic descent in m. 84. This penetrating
struggle in the final refrain allows a performer to make choices that explore different degrees of
rubato and nuances, seeking a balanced application that releases and weakens the kinetic impulse
from the earlier parts of the music.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I discussed several issues that concern creating an expressive performance
in Chopin’s Prelude in A♭, Op. 28, no. 17. The analysis explored various similarities and
differences between statements of the principal theme. The second refrain is only a partial
statement while the third is subdued and played over a tonic pedal. Chopin specifies a new
dynamic marking with each statement of the principal theme but offers no further dynamic
indications. I suggested exploring various approaches to changing or maintaining the same
dynamics.

From the analysis, I observed that the rhythm of the Prelude’s principal theme creates an
accentual pattern in which agogic stresses occur in the even-numbered measures, creating a sense
of syncopation within its hypermetrical structure. I advised considering alternative ways of
pacing the incises and the hypermeasure within each refrain, allowing for various dimensions of
articulation.

In the third statement of the refrain, the final note of the Bassbrechung enters nearly
twenty measures before the final descent of the Urlinie, as a result of the tonic pedal extension.
This creates a sense of contrapuntal and harmonic tension heightening the dramatic effect of the last refrain. Here I discussed accentuating and articulating this divergence by allowing a sense of breath prior to each *sforzando* bass note coupled with a gradually deceleration through the entire A³ section.

While I noted that the two episodes feature different music, offering a necessary element of contrast within the Prelude’s rondo structure, I also observed many similarities. Each of these similarities—related textures, common-tone connections, the rising melodic sixth as a distinct interval, a reversal of melodic contour at the peak of the each episode, chromatic descending passages, and nonduple measure groups—provides a performer with multiple opportunities for expressive interpretations.

And finally, Chopin’s allows the subdominant to take on a role of structural importance, producing an ambiguous harmonic scheme that blurs distinctions between tonic and subdominant functions. The instability of the initial tonic key offers performers expressive prospects to explore new realms of tempo and dynamic variation before returning to the original point of departure.
CHAPTER FOUR
CHOPIN ETUDE OP. 10, NO. 3 IN E MAJOR

Introduction

The Etude Op. 10, no. 3 in E major is one of Chopin’s most beloved and celebrated works. Unlike other Etudes of the set, its unusual tempo marking has been widely discussed. Kazimierz Morski has noted that while “It is natural for each performer to seek his or her own path, frequently departing from the musical text . . . the Etude, Op. 10 No. 3 . . . is always played at a slower tempo, at least in the opening section of the work, than ensues from the composer’s metronomic indications.”\(^\text{138}\) In Claudio Arrau’s 1956 recording, he plays the Etude at a metronomic tempo of \(\mathcal{J} = 60\).\(^\text{139}\) Shura Cherkassky’s rendition of the same Etude takes \textit{a tempo} of \(\mathcal{J} = 50\),\(^\text{140}\) while Lang Lang’s tempo is \(\mathcal{J} = 46\).\(^\text{141}\)

In the original autograph, Chopin gave the tempo indication \textit{Vivace ma non troppo}; in the second autograph, this appears as simple \textit{vivace}. Only the first edition indicates \textit{Lento ma non troppo}. Rudolf Steglich, in an essay from 1956, claims that it is quite possible that the \textit{vivace} marking is relating to the expressive character of the Etude and not the speed.\(^\text{142}\) He maintains that the syncopations in the left hand support this notion, suggesting that performers have frequently departed from Chopin’s written instructions as a result of this discrepancy. Similarly, John Rink has observed that though this Etude is often considered a study of \textit{legato}, he regards it

\(^{138}\) Morski (2004, 156).

\(^{139}\) Arrau (1956).

\(^{140}\) Cherkassy (1953-55 [1999]).

\(^{141}\) Lang Lang (2012).

\(^{142}\) Quoted in Rothstein (1989, 221).
as a study of syncopation.\textsuperscript{143} For Rink, the Etude’s pervasive syncopations determine the tempo and character of the work, making it “the most important element in the A section . . . from the level of [surface] detail to the level of form.”\textsuperscript{144}

Considering that an Etude often employs more than one technical or performance issue, I interpret this Etude as a study of several musical features—namely syncopation, \textit{legato} melody, and polyphony. I argue that an understanding of each of these features, and Chopin’s means of presenting them, is a necessity for delivering an expressive performance. The aim of this chapter is to consider how each of these issues influences the music—rhythmically, melodically, and harmonically—and how performers can identify and choose among options that will promote expressive delivery. Following a brief survey of several analyses of this Etude, I present my own analysis, based upon the application of Lussy’s theories. The analysis considers both surface details and deeper levels of structure, and aims to explore a range of interpretative possibilities.

\textbf{Literature Review}

In an interesting article from 1985, Jim Samson observes that the second section of the Etude’s simple tripartite form (ABA\textsuperscript{1}) is precisely twice as long as its opening section.\textsuperscript{145} The method he adopted involved counting the number of quarter-note beats within each section, as reproduced in Example 4.1. Note that in Samson’s analysis two elisions occur—one in m. 62 and the other in m. 70—which explains why he counts 156 quarter notes as opposed to 154.

\textsuperscript{143} Rink (2004, 134).
\textsuperscript{144} Ibid. (131).
\textsuperscript{145} Samson (1985, 65).
a. A section, mm. 1-21.1

b. B section, mm. 21.2-62.1

c. A\(^1\) section, mm. 62.1-77

Example 4.1: Chopin, Etude Op. 10, No. 3: the measurement of main sections in quarter-notes, adapted from Jim Samson’s analysis

According to Samson’s analysis, the principal climaxes in the Etude’s first and second sections also convey a sense of proportional equivalency. In the opening A section, the climax is reached on the thirty-third quarter-note beat (the downbeat of m. 17), with the eight additional quarter-note beats that follow closing the section (starting with the second half of m. 17 to the downbeat of m. 21). In the contrasting B section, the climax is reached in m. 54, followed by silence—the first and only notated caesura of the entire Etude. Samson observed that the latter climax is reached after a total of sixty-six quarter note beats. In the immediately subsequent measures, the retransitional passage (mm. 54-62.1) takes up an additional sixteen quarter-note
beats, closing the B section, while the \( A^1 \) section is somewhat shorter than the opening refrain. Samson’s analysis thus suggests that the Etude can be experienced as a single distinct shape.\(^{146}\)

In 2004, John Rink further developed this idea of the Etude’s proportional design. He expanded on Samson’s findings’ producing a formal analysis with brief commentary on performance issues. Rink points out that the syncopated rhythm at the quarter-note beat level from the very opening of the Etude—the sixteenth-eighth-sixteenth figure—forms the symmetrical ratio of 1:2:1, which replicates Samson’s overall formal ratio (as shown in Example 4.2). While the reprise of the A section (\( A^1 \)) is slightly shorter than its counterpart, Rink says that one could argue that it “has the necessary weight to finish off the piece satisfactorily . . . thanks [to the coda’s] temporal retraction—\textit{rallentando} and \textit{smorzando}.”\(^{147}\) Despite the slight temporal discrepancy of the reprise, Rink maintains that the Etude’s basic rhythmic shape permeates the etude’s entire form.

William Rothstein reiterates the significance of syncopation in the Etude in a publication from 1989. Rothstein recognizes that while the syncopations across the bar lines cause a metrical conflict in mm. 1-5, he argues for stressing the downbeats. He explained that “the syncopation within each quarter-note beat reappears at a larger level in the syncopations across the bar lines . . . [and that] any perception of the stressed weak beats as downbeats vitiates the local rhythmic tension generated by the syncopations.”\(^{148}\)

\(^{146}\) Chechlińska (2004, 157) argues that obvious symmetries are not always clear with Chopin’s music because he often deliberately “undermines the feeling of symmetry.”

\(^{147}\) Rink (2004, 130).

\(^{148}\) Rothstein (1989, 221).
a. Parallelisms (1)

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<th>A</th>
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<td>S</td>
<td>33 + 8</td>
<td>66 + 16</td>
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b. Parallelisms (2)

Example 4.2: Chopin, Etude Op. 10 No. 3: sectional parallelisms adapted from Rink

Rothstein’s reading was influenced by Schenker’s discussion of the Etude’s syncopated bass motive in *Free Composition*. Schenker observed that the larger syncopations in the bass generated the irregular 5-bar length of the opening phrase. By removing all of Chopin’s syncopations, Rothstein provides a suggestive recomposition of the 5-bar phrase, as shown in
Example 4.3. His point here is to demonstrate that by normalizing the rhythm and eliminating all syncopations, the expressive quality of the opening phrase is nothing like what Chopin wrote. For Rothstein, as well as Rink, the effect of the syncopated rhythm shapes much of the music and will ultimately influence many interpretative decisions a performer will make. Both Rothstein and Rink insist that the syncopation must remain audible throughout the Etude.

Example 4.3: Chopin, Etude: adaptation of Rothstein’s recomposition of mm. 1-5 as 4 bars

In 2008, David Temperley analyzed the Etude’s metrical challenges, specifically the accentuation of the downbeats in the opening section. He argued that the syncopations across the bar lines make the meter ambiguous. Unlike Rothstein, he interprets the opening phrase as conveying a trajectory in which weak beats are more stressed than downbeats. Temperley notes the agogic accents and the suppression of melodic attacks on the downbeats of measures 2, 3, and 5. Temperley writes,

Long melodic notes fall on even-numbered beats [weak beats] throughout; every even beat carries a change of harmony, and most decisively, numerous measures (for instance, measures 1, 2, 4, and 5) feature a harmonic change on the second beat but not on the following notated downbeat.\(^\text{150}\)

\(^{149}\) Rothstein (1989, 223).

\(^{150}\) Temperley (2008, 316).
To further strengthen his idea of an even-strong reading, Temperley searched for additional evidence in the piece that supported his interpretation. Of particular interest is the retransition (mm. 54-61). Subtle elements of metrical conflict can be found throughout these measures. Temperley observed that although the main theme returns on a stressed downbeat (m. 62), tied notes in the melody or in the bass obscure the downbeats of mm. 55-59, while the weak beats are continuously articulated in other voices.

Each of these analyses makes critical observations that are examined and developed further in the following analysis.

**Analysis**

The formal structure of the E major Etude is ternary (ABA\(^1\)) with a brief coda. The A section is marked *Lento ma non troppo*, presenting a beautiful cantabile melody in the top voice. It consists of a single parallel period of two phrases. As shown in Example 4.4, Chopin delays the final tonic by expanding the consequent phrase to thirteen measures, thus creating a stronger ending.

![Example 4.4: Chopin, Etude: grouping structure of the phrase units of the A section, mm. 1-21](Abbreviations:

- b.i. = basic idea
- c.i. = contrasting idea
- e.i. = expanded idea)
As Rothstein and Rink observe, a special rhythmic feature of this Etude is the syncopation that forms the accompaniment figuration at the beat level. This rhythmic motive contributes significantly to the developing momentum of the piece. On larger levels, it expands to the 1-bar figure which shapes the melody, and on even deeper levels, it governs the entire form of the composition (as Rink’s analysis has demonstrated). I begin the analysis first by enumerating various ways in which the syncopated rhythm offers conceptual challenges to a performer and considering interpretative possibilities of selected passages. I then consider various aspects of the Etude’s polyphony on small, medium, and large scales. In closing, I investigate the work’s most problematic passages that are a consequence of the syncopation and polyphony.

As in the previous analyses, I begin by isolating portions of the rhythms and considering them apart from pitch. Next, I look more closely at the individual features of the composition, studying its thematic design in conjunction with the rhythm and in connection with its linear-harmonic structure. In so doing, I will likewise, at times, need to separate tonal events from their rhythmic design.

**Rhythmic Implications in the A section**

We will begin by examining the opening passage, which is reproduced in Example 4.5. Lussy might identify this 5-bar unit as a *rythme*. As noted above, the melody is highly syncopated, stressing weak beats and avoiding attacks on the downbeats of measures 2, 3 and 5. The inner voice has a continuous sixteenth-note figuration that oscillates between various chord tones, and a persistent syncopated rhythmic figuration is written in the bass, occupying each quarter-note beat.
Example 4.5: Chopin, Etude: opening 5-bar *rythme*, mm. 1-5

The complexity of Chopin’s rhythmic design becomes clear when each of the rhythms is presented separately. In order to better understand the overall phrase structure, and how we can articulate a coherent and expressive performance of it, we will begin with the smallest unit, the *ostinato* in the bass. In its simplest form, shown in Example 4.6, this basic cell occurs at the 1-beat level.

Example 4.6: Chopin, Etude: the basic cell at the 1-beat level

One might begin by tapping and speaking the rhythm in Example 4.6, repeating the figure several times. An expressive performance of the Etude will employ a variety of nuanced versions of the basic cell—some leaning forward, others holding back, some more urgent, others less. Let us experiment with degrees of speed, duration, and volume so we can become familiar with many options. For instance, one might try shaping the basic cell by very slightly lengthening the
eighth note and shortening the second sixteenth note. This creates a sense of energy emerging from the end of the first cell towards the beginning of its repetition. Now let us try shortening the first sixteenth note while lengthening the eighth note. This slight *accelerando* produces a strong feeling of apprehension. Lastly, we can lengthen the duration of the first sixteenth note while shortening the eighth note. This generates a sense of delay in the beginning of each cell, mildly setting the gesture in motion. Of course, excessive use of any of these possibilities will lead to an unmusical rendering. To invent an expressive performance depends largely on employing an appropriate gesture at the right time, and creating a coherent progression over longer spans.

As Rothstein has observed, the syncopation of the basic cell at the quarter-note beat level expands to the 2-bar level, as shown in Example 4.7. Repetitions of the basic cell create a 2-bar unit, which on a deeper level produces an enlarged version of itself. Experiment with performing the alternatives shown in Example 4.8. In Example 4.8(a), we shape the unit by thinking of energy emerging from the beginning and accelerating gradually towards the end. In contrast, by gently slowing towards the end, as in Example 4.8(b), we project a point of initiation that sets the unit in motion. A third possibility, Example 4.8(c), we can accelerate to the third basic cell and slightly slow down into the fourth, allowing the energy to flow to the unit’s midpoint and taper off at the end. Again, experiment with each of these possibilities in varied combinations.

Example 4.7: Chopin, Etude: the basic cell expanded from the 1-beat level to the 2-bar level
Example 4.8: Chopin, Etude: shaping the basic cell at the 2-bar level

melody of the entire opening *rythme* (mm. 1-5) is permeated by anacrustic rhythms that lead to agogic accents on weak beats. In essence it consists of six anacrustic figures, five of which direct motion toward the second beat. Notice that these figures gradually accumulate additional sixteenth-note attacks, as the brackets indicate in Example 4.9. Lussy observed that anacrustic rhythms generally direct energy toward a strong event. Chopin’s Etude begins with a classic example (\(\text{\textbullet\textbullet}\)).

Example 4.9: Chopin, Etude: anacrustic rhythms for the opening *rythme*, mm. 1-5
As Rothstein has observed, such rhythms are often not experienced as being “constant in speed . . . [but rather] they accelerate.”\textsuperscript{151} An expressive performance, however, would certainly not consist of treating each of these figures identically. Despite the fact that anacrustic rhythms inherently draw discernible shapes—directing energy forward—still, we can consider alternative ways to shape the \textit{rythme} as a complete unit. As in previous experiments, let us try tapping and speaking the variations shown in Example 4.10. In Example 4.10(a), the end of the unit is the

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{example410}
\caption{Example 4.10: Chopin, Etude: shaping of the anacrustic rhythms of the opening \textit{rythme}, mm. 1-5}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{151} Rothstein (2005, 16).
goal toward which the energy flows. In Example 4.10(b), the energy flows from a point of initiation, moderately slowing as it reaches completion. In Example 4.10(c), we shape our performance by accelerating into the second beat of m. 3, then slowing at the end. Each of these alternatives can be effective; a performer might well consider employing two or more of them in a single performance.

The second *rythme* of the antecedent phrase begins in m. 6 with a new rhythmic figure in the melody—eight sixteenth notes followed by an eighth note. This new figure is an expansion of specific features of the opening *rythme*. Its shape can be regarded as a motivic variation of the melody’s anacrustic rhythms—a further extension of the successive accumulation of sixteenth notes. Near the end of the A section, it becomes the chief rhythmic feature leading to the climax (m. 17). Example 4.11 indicates four possible interpretations: to perform the sixteenth notes straight without any use of *rubato* (see Example 4.11, a), to direct the energy towards the end of

**Example 4.11: Chopin, Etude: shaping of the second *rythme* of the antecedent phrase, mm.6-7**
the figure (see Example 4.11, b), to begin with a strong impulse that gently slows (see Example 4.11, c), or to start with a slight *accelerando* that peaks at its midpoint and then takes a small *ritardando* as the unit reaches its end (see Example 4.11, d).

A notable feature of this last variation is that the rhythmic design creates a sixteenth note grouping of 2+4+2, duplicating the proportional design of the basic cell (a ratio of 1:2:1), as shown in Example 4.12.

![Example 4.12](image)

Example 4.12: Chopin, Etude: rhythmic augmentation of the basic cell in the second *rythme* of the antecedent phrase, mm.6-7

Measures 9-13 are substantially the same as mm. 1-5, but mm. 14-16 are rich and interesting in the ways they vary the rhythms of mm. 6-8. Chopin introduces new *legato* slurs in mm. 14-15 and *portato* markings in m. 16. These rhythms, however, restore metrical equilibrium by placing agogic accents on downbeats rather than on weak beats, driving the music toward the powerful arrival at the climax. Chopin concludes the A section with an expansion that produces another irregular grouping of five measures. The inner rhythmic organization of these measures (mm. 17-21) bears much similarity to the opening *rythme* of the antecedent phrase—a 5-bar grouping featuring several anacrusic configurations. The graphs of Example 4.13 suggest various ways in which one can explore gradations in velocity.
Example 4.13: Chopin, Etude: shaping of the third *rythme* in the expansion of the consequent phrase, mm.17-21

**Tonal Implications in the A section**

For Lussy, musical expression is generated by “irregular and unexpected notes [that] appear and break the regularity of the metrical accent, or destroy[s] the symmetry of the first
rhythmical design.” To achieve an expressive performance, Lussy maintains that we have to locate “the notes and passages which most excite and impress the performer.” In other words, what leads to expressive performance is the effective rendering of notes and rhythms that are thwarted or unexpected, generating a surprise. A crucial aspect of the opening rythme’s grouping and shape depends in part upon its tonal relationships. For this reason, let us now consider some of the tonal features in the Etude’s A section, focusing primarily on the local surprises.

The first local surprise we find is in mm. 1-2, the opening *incise*. What is unusual about the *incise* is how the melody relates to the meter. Example 4.14 illustrates this phenomenon:

a. Middle-accented *incise*

![Middle-accented incise](image)

b. End-accented *incise*

![End-accented incise](image)

Example 4.14: Chopin, Etude: *incise*, mm. 1-2

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152 Lussy (1885, 126).

153 Ibid. (4).
appears in the strongest position preceded by an anacrustic leap of a fourth, $f^4$ emerges on the weak beat of m. 1, and $g^4$ occurs on the weak beat of m. 2.

If we return to Rothstein’s recomposition of this passage in Example 4.3, we will observe that the recomposition is bland and comparatively lifeless because the ascent by steps lacks Chopin’s dramatically lengthened dominant harmony, which provides time for $g^4$ to function as an upper neighbor to $f^4$. Note that each of these three tones ($e^4$-$f^4$-$g^4$) is approached differently. Likewise, Chopin articulates each feature of the incise with distinct markings—a crescendo to the second beat of m. 1, a crescendo/decrescendo in the first beat of m. 2, and an accent on the final note. We might characterize the incise’s shape as follows: one hears the first downbeat as softly stressed since it is the first accent métrique, a slightly stronger agogic accent on the second beat of m. 1 with its longer duration preceded by a crescendo marking, and the strongest stress on the final note because it is an accent rythmique, a goal toward which the incise’s energy is flowing. It also involves an articulated accent by the composer. All the intervening tones are relatively weak in relation, except of course the slight crescendo/decrescendo marking Chopin provides for the duration of beat 1 in m. 2. Still, this event should not be stressed as much as the weak beats of mm. 1-2 as they involve longer durations. Notice that this impression does not depend upon Chopin’s markings: it would occur even if the rhythm was presented without any articulations.

To make any passage expressive, a performer will need to be sensitive not only to its dynamics but also to its timing. Each strong stress is preceded by an anacrusis and each anacrusis expands by one tone. The combination of these anacrustic figurations, together with the tied note to the downbeat of m. 2, generates at least two possibilities: a middle- or an end-accented incise. The middle-accented incise produces an increase of forward motion to $f^4$, followed by a
decrease of energy to g⁴. Since Lussy’s theory proposes that every action must balance itself with a counter-action, this would suggest a slight *accelerando* in the second beat of m. 1 followed by a *rallentando* in the first beat of m. 2. The end-accented *incise* creates a continuous flow of motion to g⁴. This option allows the energy to continue to build towards the climax of the phrase in m. 3. An expressive performer should consider using the middle-accented *incise* in mm. 1-2 while implementing the end-accented option in mm. 9-10. Lastly, the entire opening *rythme* (mm. 1-5) employs a continual succession of distinct, closely unified anacrustic rhythms, creating an impression of metric instability and agitated drive to the last note of the phrase, as noted above in Example 4.14(b). The unusual length of the opening *rythme*, coupled with its strong closure (a perfect authentic cadence on beat 2 of m. 5), certainly delivers another surprise. The 2-bar succession initiated by the *incise* will now be compromised and challenged by the asymmetrical grouping of the 5-bar *rythme*. A fascinating aspect of the *rythme* is that its shape is governed by the basic cell at the 2-bar level. Each time a bass note is repeated over the bar line (creating larger syncopations), Chopin accordingly sustains the melody and inner voices over the bar lines (see Example 4.15). Furthermore, as Example 4.15 illustrates, the ratios that define the basic cell at the 2-bar level creates an inversion of basic cell at the 5-bar level (4:2:4). There are four quarter notes in mm. 1-2, followed by two quarter notes in m. 3, and again four quarter notes in mm. 4-5. Consequently, the pervasive syncopation of the basic cell is occurring at the beat level, the 2-bar level, and the 5-bar level. To highlight this rhythmic motive, in my own playing, I accompany each change of pitch in the bass with a pedal change. Despite Hugo Goldenzweig’s recommendation of changing the pedal on each beat,¹⁵⁴ I suggest not changing

Example 4.15: Chopin, Etude: harmonic syncopations of opening \textit{rythme}, mm. 1-5

the pedal over the bar line unless the bass note changes. This approach produces a richer tone and lends emphasis to the syncopated changes of harmony.

The basic cell at the 1-bar level produces a temporary displacement of stress within each measure, resulting in an obscuring of metrical boundaries, rather than a complete reversal of metrical relations. This gives rise to a lucid yet irregular phrase length whose underlying structure could be described as a latent and varied organization of an \textit{amphibrach} rhythmic grouping (\(\text{\textcircled{1}} \text{\textcircled{2}} \text{\textcircled{3}}\)). Moreover, a Schenkerian perspective reveals that the melodic line shows that it is built of a single motivic element—a stepwise rising third (see Example 4.16).

Example 4.16: Chopin Etude: germ cell within the opening \textit{incise}, mm. 1-2
We will refer to this ascending line as the germ cell. The germ cell sheds much light on the work’s otherwise evasive rhythmic structure.

Measures 1-4 set up an expectation of a normative 4-bar phrase that would typically lead to a half-cadence. Chopin, however, rhythmically augments the basic cell figure to create an irregular grouping of five bars, as discussed above. This asymmetrical unit establishes a harmonic rhythm of one chord per two beats throughout the rythme, except for the dominant chord on the second beat of m. 3 and the tonic chord on the first beat of m. 4, which both involve only one beat per chord. Interestingly, where the harmonic rhythm accelerates (mm. 3-4), Chopin interrupts the continuity of the germ cell introduced in the incise by leaping up to c♯⁵, producing another syncopation—the highest note of the phrase is heard on a weak beat—and then immediately descending from the melody’s high point back to f⁴ through a falling sixteenth-note passage (see Example 4.17, a). Ordinarily, the conventional form of a 4-bar unit arriving on 2 is supported with a half cadence, which has a strong association with the antecedent function. Chopin, instead, harmonizes 2 with a V⁷ chord in m. 4 and augments its duration to two beats, which leads to a perfect authentic cadence on the second beat of m. 5. The surprise is, first, that Chopin does not make a half cadence in m. 4, and second, that the extra measure creates a neat balance between the first half of the phrase (which comprises a Schenkerian Anstieg), yielding a 5+5 structure. Since the authentic cadence in m. 5 arrives on the second rather than the first beat, its function is emphasized as a temporary and not very strong goal. Nevertheless, as in the Prelude in A major (see Chapter 1), the early authentic cadence affects closure for the entire antecedent phrase, as it is the strongest cadential moment in the passage.

Example 4.17: Chopin, Etude: melodic syncopations of the opening *rythme*, mm. 1-5

Although the climatic point of the *rythme* (c♯⁵) is rhythmically linked to the agogic accents in the *incise* (♯⁴ in m. 1 and the ♭⁴ in m. 2), contrapuntally it contrasts with all other agogic accents of the *rythme*. That is, ♩⁴ and ♭⁴ are harmonized with consonant support, while c♯⁵ functions as an *appoggiatura*—its resolution is b⁴ over the V⁷ chord. In addition to accelerating the melodic and harmonic motion, Chopin increases the energy of the climax by setting the climactic tone as a dissonance. Moreover, the motivic relationship of the dissonant c♯⁵ resolving to the consonant b⁴ forms a rhythmic augmentation of the previous neighboring figures (g⁴–♯⁴ and a⁴–♭⁴), as shown by the brackets in Example 4.18(a). For Lussy, the highest note of a group requires an *accent pathétique*, especially if it involves a “higher auxiliary note.”

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156 Lussy (1885, 140).
neighbors (d♯, g♯, a♯, and c♯)—like the anacrustic rhythms—grow progressively longer:

\[ \text{Example 4.18(b)} \]

Example 4.18(b) draws attention to the fact that the overall effect of the repeated notes within the neighboring figures gives rise to a modification of the basic cell.

The rythme’s anacrustic figurations are stated three times consecutively, each one ascending higher than before. To create an expressive rendition, we might consider slightly shortening the eighth-note upbeat to m. 1 and somewhat accelerating and increasing the dynamics to the second beat. We could then hold back slightly to accelerate and crescendo again, as each anacrustic figuration rises. In my own playing, I intensify my gradations of volume and velocity marginally, climaxing on the appoggiatura of m. 3. Although I am attempting to express a progressive intensification, I play the final approach to the climax with a slight delay, as Lussy
would have advised. A *diminuendo* in the melody appropriately accompanies the *appoggiatura*’s resolution.

With Chopin’s *decrescendo* markings, it is quite appropriate to include a *ritardando*, since the *rythme* ends with a perfect authentic cadence. Such a progression, of course, must be played carefully in order to continue the flow. In Andrei Gavrilov’s 1985/87 recording, he lingers slightly on the initial pickup and emphasizes the g♯ in m. 5 to re-enliven the phrase, as shown in Example 4.19. This unexpected cadence should not raise the threat of premature closure. Rather, it should create in the listener an almost urgent desire to know what follows: the declined half cadence leaves the listener hanging in suspense.

![Example 4.19: Chopin, Etude: dynamic phrasing for the opening *rythme*, mm. 1-5](image)

In the second part of the antecedent phrase (mm. 6-8), a melodic sequence occurs, as shown in Example 4.20. For such an event, Temperley coined the phrase, “first occurrence strong” rule. Temperley explains, “When a pattern is immediately repeated, with each instance of the pattern containing one beat at a certain metrical level, I tend to hear the first beat as stronger than the second.” However, Chopin’s *crescendo* marking leading to the second beat of m. 6

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Example 4.20: Chopin, Etude: sequence and step motion in the second part of the antecedent phrase, m. 6-8

seems to override Temperley’s “first occurrence strong” rule. Even though the downbeat of m. 6 features a new harmony (V\(^7\)/IV), it does not involve a change of bass—the tonic harmony becomes an applied dominant of the subdominant. As in mm. 1-5, I might suggest not changing the pedal until the bass note changes. The goal of the sequence is b\(^4\) on the second beat of m. 8, after climaxing on the c\(^#5\) (\(\hat{6}\)) in the first beat of m. 7. Example 4.21 illustrates that the melodic \(\hat{6}\) will receive an expressive accent—in accordance with Lussy’s theory since it is the highest note of the melodic segment—and leads to the dominant harmony in m. 7.

A curious feature of the melody line in m. 6 is the grouping of its internal structure, as shown in Example 4.21. The juxtaposition of the vertical sonority combined with the linear progression of the double neighboring figures give rise to a third syntax—a motivic transformation of the basic cell and the germ cell. Schenker referred to this type of technique as *Knüpftechnik* (linkage technique). In *Das Meisterwerk in der Musik*, Schenker explains that it is “A technique related to the connection of ensuing spans . . . it concerns the connection or
Example 4.21: Chopin, Etude: expressive and harmonic emphasis in the second part of the antecedent phrase, mm. 6-8

linkages of phrases and/or sections.”¹⁵⁹ According to Schenker, these connections can be linked by various techniques, including motivic repetitions. As noted above, the harmonically supported principal tones on both beats of m. 6 are reaching towards 5 (which will not arrive until m. 8). In m. 7, c#⁵ is treated as an upper auxiliary to b⁴ (as it was in m. 3), although it is now consonantly supported. As this third-progression ascends to b⁴, Chopin reaches over the implied goal and sounds a c#⁵ at the end of the slur, delaying its resolution for an additional three beats. Note that this third-progression involves polyphonic melody—Chopin dips into the inner voice, where #⁴ is elaborated. Within each beat of m. 6, embellishing figures prolong each tone of the germ cell with a double neighbor figure, as shown in Example 4.22.

Although the pitches conceal the original tones of the germ cell, Peter Smith explains that when applying Schenker’s technique of linkage “it is still possible to assert a motivic connection

¹⁵⁹ Quoted in Kalib (1973, 89).
Example 4.22: Chopin, Etude: a variant of the germ cell in the second *rythme*, mm. 6-8

even if a repetition fails to reproduce exactly the pitches of the original cell." In m. 6, I might consider the possibility of a motivic linkage through the use of an altered germ cell, as suggested in Example 4.23.

Example 4.23: Chopin, Etude: melodic grouping of the basic cell in the second *rythme* of the antecedent phrase, m. 6

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The melodic structure in m. 6 creates a grouping of 2+4+2. The outer groupings of two pitches last exactly half as long as the center grouping of four pitches, which duplicates the pattern of the basic cell. While it contradicts the phrasing of Example 4.22, it does however, represent an alternative way to articulate the groupings.

Naturally, strict guidelines for rubato cannot be articulated with precision; nonetheless, we can perceive dynamic shapes in the notated score that suggest clearly defined rhythmic or motivic patterns—patterns that can assist us in articulating an expressive interpretation. For instance, the melody in m. 6 begins with a rising motion at the beat level. Within this rising contour, I delay, to a small degree, the attack on each beat as it ascends, conveying a sense of growing intensity, as if in opposition to gravity. In contrast, I accelerate and crescendo through the germ cell figurations between the beats, producing a motion typically associated with anacrustic gestures. Although this second rythme reaches as high as the first rythme, its contour is truncated by comparison to that of the first rythme. Whereas the first climax functions as a dissonance, here it is consonant. Therefore, a performer must take care to project the climax of the second rythme more passionately than the first by striking the c♯5 with greater force.

Between beat 2 of m. 6 and beat 1 of m. 7, a 5-6 motion above the bass (a2) produces a supertonic seventh chord. This chord intensifies motion to the dominant chord (see Example 4.24). Chopin creates further rhythmic tension by syncopating the melody line in m. 7. Example 4.24 shows the polyphonic implications of the melodic line of mm. 7-8. The polyphonic melody features a division into soprano and alto registers. The alto voice produces yet another syncopation within the 1-bar level, stressing the weak pulses of the measure. Chopin intensifies the measure by writing stretto, considerably changing the even flow of the line. This sudden tempo gesture gives the syncopations an intense character, driving very urgently to the dominant.
The dominant harmony in m. 8 brings the resolution of both the soprano and the syncopated alto voice.

Resolution of e⁴ to d⁴ in m. 8 should release tension just as motion from a♯³ to a³ should restore energy. This resolution must be played more softly than the preceding dissonances. The *ritenuto* marking in m. 8 immediately slows down the motion, preparing the beginning of the consequent phrase in m. 9. The intensity should be conveyed by small and gradual increases in the rate of pulse. I would begin with a *crescendo* and slight *accelerando* in m. 6 to the downbeat of m. 7. Although the bass note does not change to the downbeat of m. 7, a pedal change after the first sixteenth is mandatory as it features the first minor harmony we have heard in the piece, producing a local surprise. In my playing, I emphasize the f♯³ in the tenor line, stressing the basic cell at the 1-beat level. My purpose here is twofold: to stress the root of the harmony, and to intensify the syncopated accents that Chopin notates in both the tenor and the top line. Chopin’s *stretto* compels a slight *accelerando* into the last beat of m. 8.

The most interesting rhythmic feature of the antecedent phrase is its ending. Do we hear this phrase as concluding with a half cadence on the second beat of m. 8, as do Cadwallader and
Or do we hear it proceeding to an imperfect authentic cadence eliding with the beginning of the consequent phrase on the downbeat of m. 9? Certainly, the delayed motion of the soprano line (c#⁵ of m. 7 resolving to b⁴ of m. 8) conveys a sense of release and melodic closure, which is further reinforced by Chopin’s markings of *tenuto* and *ritenuto*. The same contrapuntal motion is imitated in the bass on each beat in m. 8 (6 to 5). The dissonance in the tenor voice (m. 8’s a³), which functions as the seventh of the dominant, creates a sense of urgency, however, making it harmonically active in its context. Ultimately, this creates a sense of kinetic impulse that must be released, suggesting that the phrase needs to continue to its note of resolution. This type of phrase overlap in Chopin’s music is not unusual. Charles Burkhart discusses a similar passage in the opening of Chopin’s Mazurka, Op. 59, No. 2. From his analysis he explains, “Now it happens that the very first such phrase (bars 1-8) ends on a semicadence (V) that is composed in a most unusual way: in spite of the cadence, the melodic line willfully presses on into bar 9.” Thus, to avoid a stop and restart, Chopin creates a seamless and very subtle effect of a progression that appears to lead toward a melodic cadence, but in the harmonic dimension, actively seeks resolution (similar cadential passages can be found in Chopin’s Prelude in E major, Op. 28, no. 9 in mm. 4-5 and 8-9). I am certain that I hear m. 9 as a beginning, and less certain that I hear it as an ending. A voice leading reduction clarifies the meaning of the cadence with its underlying pattern of alternating tenths and octaves. Example 4.25 shows how Chopin creates this beautiful contrapuntal relationship (10-8) between the outer voices in the second *rythme* (for other local 10-8-10 successions see m. 3 and mm. 6-7).

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161 Cadwallader and Gagné (2011, 48).

162 Burkhart (2005, 7).
Example 4.25: Chopin, Etude: contrapuntal analysis of outer voices in second *rythme*, mm. 6-9

In my own playing, to project the half cadence, I try to make the beginning of the consequent phrase grow out of the ending of the antecedent phrase, by creating a “sense of breath” just before the consequent phrase’s first note. One might think of such a gesture as representing a replacement for the anacrusis before m. 1.

In the consequent phrase, beginning with the second *rythme* (mm. 14-16), Chopin intensifies the chromaticism in the progression towards the dominant. He creates a musical connecting tissue that leads sequentially to the submediant chord on the second beat of m. 15. The submediant chord is then expanded by an applied dominant of the dominant and a French augmented sixth chord in m. 16. These chromatic intermediate chords increase the drive to the passionate climatic event of the A section—the cadential six-four chord in m. 17. An interesting feature of the passage is its melodic grouping structure. In mm. 14-15 we find a sequence that projects 1-bar groupings. The melodic contour of m. 6 returns in m. 16, where the second beat repeats that of the first a step higher. The diminution from one bar to one beat repetitions lends the passage greater urgency, and along with the markings *con forza* and *crescendo e ritenuto*, clearly calls for increasing volume and decreasing velocity. Whereas the contour of the melody
is similar to that of m. 6, however, the function of its supporting harmony is quite different. In
the antecedent phrase the harmony in m. 6 helps to expand a tonic-predominant-dominant
progression. In m.16, the passing motion in the soprano (e\textsuperscript{5} to g\textsuperscript{5}) is supported by a chromatic
bass descent to the dominant, as shown in Example 4.26.

Example 4.26: Chopin, Etude: analysis of contrapuntal motion, mm. 16-17

The graph in Example 4.27 demonstrates how the note grouping in the top voices of mm.
14-15 generates variants of the basic cell. It is important to note that this pattern is a true instance
of Knüpfe technik—it is a result of surface grouping and is not a voice-leading event. It cuts across
harmonic and voice leading segments. Its 2+4+2 grouping coexists with a 4+4 grouping—that is,
it is recognizable as a possible grouping variation.

In the midst of this sequence, Chopin thickens the texture in the treble voices and creates
a connective tissue of music using an ascending four-note motive, as shown in Example 4.28.
Beneath the soprano’s basic cell, masked in the alto line, is a rising motive from f\#\textsuperscript{4} to a\textsuperscript{4}. This
same pattern repeats itself a third higher in m. 15. Thus, the melodic structure produces the same
grouping of m. 6 (2+4+2). The pattern recurs a final time in the consequent phrase in m. 16,
Example 4.27: Chopin, Etude: possible note grouping variation in mm. 14-15

serving as a connective motion, transferring the register of the Kopfton an octave higher. The basic cell evaporates into a chordal texture in this final ascent. Chopin enhances the texture harmonically, while simultaneously accumulating momentum in the melody, driving urgently towards the climax. The harmonic progression of the rythme establishes a scheme that becomes a significant aspect of the A section’s final segment. Example 4.28 shows how the chords of the ascending third sequence of mm. 14-15 are grouped in pairs: V^7/IV-IV, V^7/vi-vi, V^7-(P)-V.

Chopin interpolates a chromatic passing chord (the French augmented sixth) in between the submediant and dominant. The broader motion of the sequence suggests motion from IV-vi-V, neighboring root motion below and above the dominant. Naturally, these chords could not appear
in direct succession because of the resulting parallel octaves. Thus, the intervening applied dominants prevent the unsatisfactory voice leading.

Example 4.28: Chopin, Etude: analysis of consequent phrase and six-four expansion, mm. 14-21

Following the climax, the harmonic symmetry reverses itself, providing a satisfying continuation of the phrase. The treatment of the climactic six-four chord in m. 17, however, is
unconventional. Initially, it sounds like as a cadential six-four chord—that is, a dominant harmony—since it is preceded by the dominant of the dominant (B major), and an augmented sixth chord. Resolution to a root position dominant, on the other hand, is not straightforward. In *Phrase Rhythm of Tonal Music*, Rothstein explains this phenomenon:

> The first beat of m. 18 might be taken for the resolution at first glance, but it does not sound like the resolution. This is because m. 18 is already in the midst of a sequence, and chords in the middle of a sequence generally lack the status of significant functional harmonies.\(^{163}\)

The resulting sequence from mm. 17-21 expands the phrase, prolonging the six-four chord over four measures. Rothstein considers this sequence a harmonic reinterpretation—the (dominant) six-four chord is reinterpreted as a tonic six-four chord, resulting in an “expanded final tonic.”\(^{164}\)

As Example 4.28 illustrates, this prolongation allows the melody to return to its obligatory register, and closes the section with a plagal progression.

The subdominant plays an essential role in both the opening and closing sections of the Etude. While a plagal event often occurs after a progression in which the tonic is securely established by a strong dominant, Chopin instead uses the subdominant chord in mm. 17-21 to expand tonic harmony and avoid the typical authentic cadence. What Chopin avoids is strong dominant-tonic arrivals at the endings—almost as if these had already been used up at mm. 5, 9, and 13. Likewise, in the final measures of the reprise, Chopin will again avoid an authentic cadence. In its place, he expands the final tonic with a plagal motion by launching into a closing extension (mm. 73-77) that features the minor subdominant. This extension allows the energy of the Etude to dissolve while reaffirming and prolonging the tonic through multiple repetitions of

\(^{163}\) Rothstein (1989, 225).

\(^{164}\) Ibid.
e² in the bass. Thus, like the Prelude in A♭ major, Op. 28 no. 17 (see Chapter 3), Chopin has created a satisfying and conclusive effect by strongly confirming the tonic and generating a feeling of repose by means of the subdominant.

Motivic Fragments and Shapes

We can now identify several problems with hearing the first section of the Etude in terms of a conventional antecedent/consequent period. First, mm. 1–4 do not lead to an expected half-cadence. Instead, Chopin furnishes a perfect authentic cadence in m. 5. Second, mm. 6–8 do not progress to a simple half-cadence as expected. Rather, this passage is compromised by an apparent elision in m. 9. And third, mm. 17–21 do not reach the expected perfect authentic cadence. In its place, a strange dissolving six-four chord is combined with a plagal arrival, vi-IV-I in mm. 18–21.

To help us explain such illusive and paradoxical observations, let us now examine the way in which specific motives help shape the passage. Motivic fragments can arise in various ways in a composition. More often than not, tonal compositions may be constructed using several underlying motivic ideas. In my view, the richness and complexity of Chopin’s Etude derives from a motivic structure that is inextricably related to its form, creating a context in which the motives operate. I have identified seven essential motivic units that are recognizable, and allow variation, creating coherent structure in Chopin’s Etude. Example 4.29 identifies each motive by name (simply as useful shorthand). Some of these motives have already been mentioned.

The primary rhythmic motive, the basic cell (see Example 4.29, a), is the fundamental source of energy that creates prevailing syncopations throughout the Etude. As noted above, it
Example 4.29: Chopin, Etude: seven essential motivic units

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>(a) basic cell</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>g. appoggiatura motive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) germ cell [third progression]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) upper neighbor cell</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) double neighbor cell</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e) descending/ascending cell [combines two third progressions]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(f) circular cell</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
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operates at the beat level, the 2-bar level, the 5-bar level, and at the level of the piece as a whole. In addition, it manifests itself as a product of note grouping, offering different possibilities of overall performance. In the climax of the B section (mm. 46-54), for instance, the motive reappears in varied form providing a sense of inner coherence and structural conformity.

Instances of the germ cell appear throughout the Etude, especially in pinnacle passages like the retransition and the coda, contributing to the composition’s formal design. This motive permeates the work, occurring in a variety of different ways. In its simplest form it generates a linear progression that leads to the Kopfton (see Example 4.29, b). At the end of the antecedent phrase, in mm. 6-8, it appears in a transposed and embellished form (see Example 4.22).

Approaching the climax of the A section, Chopin expands the melodic register, using the germ cell to create melodic coherence. As Example 4.30 depicts, beneath the expanded germ cell are subordinate entrances of the same cell, which project the rhythm of the basic cell. In preparing to perform this passage, one might try playing only the notes on the beats leaving out the others. As the line ascends, a sense of lengthening is felt quite naturally between the e⁵ to g♯⁵. Now try playing both the notes on the beats and the subordinate germ cells that lead into them, maintaining the same flowing arch, but this time stretching the notes that make up the expanded germ cell slightly more. In my own playing, I use the notes of the expanded germ cell to create a sense of direction and the notes of the subordinate germ cells to create a layer of dynamics—each rising cell calls for a crescendo and a slowing of tempo. This approach corresponds wonderfully to Lussy’s mouvement passionnel: “There must be a rallentando at the end of an ascending or descending progression, especially if the design changes.”

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165 Lussy (1885, 182).
Example 4.30: Chopin, Etude: the rising motion of the germ cell approaching the climactic moment of the A section, mm. 16-17

A transformed version of the germ cell occurs over a broader span of music in mm. 30-38, within the Etude’s B section. This part of the Etude creates a dramatic and unnerving effect. As Example 4.31 illustrates, the poignant melodic and harmonic tension is created by two half-diminished seventh chords (on c♯ and d♯) and one fully diminished-seventh chord (e♯). Each chord initiates a sequential progression, creating a course of melodic disjunction and contracting leaps, which are balanced by the rising melodic stepwise motion of a third. In this transformed version, the germ cell forms a structural foundation in the passage, providing coherence and direction. Although the germ cell is outlined over a larger span of music, creating a degree of separation, Cadwallader and Gagné explain, “The notes that begin and end motions frequently stand out more than the tones in between.”166

166 Cadwallader and Gagné (2011, 21).
Example 4.31: Chopin, Etude: transformed version of the germ cell, mm. 30-38

Example 4.32 illustrates a subordinate progression that melodically and harmonically leads to the climactic dominant of the B section. Chopin develops a chromatically altered version of the germ cell in mm. 43 and 45. Notice that as the melody ascends by third, the bass line simultaneously inverts the germ cell, creating voice exchange figures. Chopin intensifies this moment with a neighboring motion above and below the bass. What I find most enticing about this passage is the close succession of statements of the modally inflected germ cell. In my own playing, I integrate several attacks, with the strongest stresses on the beginning of each rising cell. Lussy would advise that in addition to the accents we must also accelerate, “When at the beginning of rhythms, the melody and the bass move exceptionally, in contrary motion, whether converging or diverging.”

\[ \text{mm: } 30 \quad 32 \quad 34 \quad 36 \quad 38 \]

\[ \frac{5}{3} \quad \frac{6}{4} \quad \frac{5}{3} \quad \frac{6}{4} \quad \frac{6}{3} \]

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\[ ^{167} \text{Lussy (1885, 174).} \]
Example 4.33 depicts the basic cell projected on different rhythmic levels. In this instance, capturing the expansion of the basic cell allows the pianist to make sense of this virtuosic passage, creating and maintaining a delicate and proportional balance. To intensify the drama, Chopin metrically alters the beginning of the pattern—rather than starting on a strong beat, it now begins on the second sixteenth note of the bar. The challenge to the pianist is to avoid making the beginning of each grouping sound like a downbeat. In my own playing, I try to observe Chopin’s rhythmic notation as precisely as physically possible. I accomplish this by incorporating a slight *ritardando* at the end of m. 45 to the downbeat of m. 46. I avoid, however, elongating the downbeat in m. 46 so that the beginning of the *con bravura* section is clearly syncopated. An exaggerated *rubato* on the downbeat of m. 46, I feel, weakens the rhythmic
Example 4.33: Chopin, Etude: the basic cell projected at different rhythmic levels, mm. 46-54
tension that Chopin has so skillfully integrated into the passage. To assist with articulating the syncopation, I like to place a slight accent at the beginning of each grouping that replicates the basic cell—that is, accents that retain the underlying pulse of 4+8+4. This allows the syncopation to become an integral part of the entire passage. Moreover, the stress developing from the syncopation destabilizes the entire passage, creating intense momentum. Lussy would concur with such an interpretation since he states that “Accents must be given to . . . [those notes that] begin the first rhythm on the unaccented beat . . . [especially] if the notes are more numerous . . . [and] proceed in a different motion.”

When Chopin finally stabilizes and reestablishes metrical regularity on the downbeat of m. 54, connecting the end of the climactic event of the B section to the retransition, the moment is even more special if the syncopation that preceded it was observed. Lastly, in the retransition (mm. 54-61), Chopin uses the basic cell as a melodic gesture that leads to the return of the tonic melody, as shown in Example 4.34.

Example 4.34: Chopin, Etude: basic cell as a motivic gesture in the retransition, mm. 58-59

As Chopin prepares the return of the main theme material in the retransition, a descending stepwise pattern of a third appears in mm. 58-59. By means of this transformed and inverted germ cell, Chopin leads from the prolonged key area of the dominant back to the tonic, as shown in Example 4.35.

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Lussy (1885, 135).
Example 4.35: Chopin, Etude: harmonic scheme in the retransition, mm. 54-63

As noted earlier, a 5-bar extension establishes a plagal progression at the end of the work, mm. 73-77. The germ cell is now inverted, appearing in its descending form, as shown in Example 4.36. After reaching the climax in the $A^1$ section (m. 70), Chopin reestablishes the...
obligatory register of the Kopfton in m. 73. This 5-bar extension comprises two broad motions:
(1) it initiates a new dramatic element, a modally inflected plagal cadence that initiates the final
descent from the Kopfton, and (2) it restores rhythmical balance by eliminating all syncopation—
each accent now occurs on a strong beat. Given Chopin’s markings—rallentando and
smorzando—it is effective to slightly lengthen each measure as the germ cell descends and as the
piece unwinds to its end. The modal mixture creates an even greater tendency to want to slow the
tempo, since it involves notes foreign to the tonic key. Lussy explains, “There must be a
rallentando . . . at the end of a phrase which is, by exception, polyphonic and contrapuntal, and
contains complicated harmony, resolved discords, or suspensions, etc.”169

Example 4.36: Chopin, Etude: the final descent from the Kopfton using the inverted germ
cell, mm. 73-77

Two other motives create a sense of tonal coherence within the A section. Chopin uses
these motivic patterns in immediate succession and over larger spans of music. The upper
neighbor cell, for instance, first appears in m. 2 (see Example 4.29, c). It is stated a step higher in
m. 3 and returns to its original configuration of tones in m. 5. By means of repetition, it delays

169 Lussy (1885, 192).
and intensifies the forward motion of the rythme’s subsequent goal, e⁴ in m. 5. Note that the first repetition of the motive is used in sequence to heighten the climax of the rythme (m. 3), while the second repetition functions as a structural resolution to ¹ (m. 5). Schenker’s motto, “Semper idem sed non eodem modo” (Always the same, but never in the same way)¹⁷⁰ reminds us that these functional implications can be of great help in understanding the expressive articulations of the music. In the second rythme of the consequent phrase, the upper neighbor cell, in conjunction with the double neighbor cell (see Example 4.29, d), creates a sequential force of motion that ultimately leads to the climax in m. 17. As Example 4.37 illustrates, Chopin arranges both the upper neighbor and the double neighbor cells to produce an increasing forward momentum to help shape the climax.

The grouping of the motives implies a consistent subdivision of Chopin’s crescendo marking. Let us try playing the reduction of the cells found in Example 4.38. We begin by playing only the upper neighbor and double neighbor cells. I recommend accelerating and gradually getting louder through the upper neighbor cell of m. 14, followed by a slight pulling back on the double neighbor cell. I would then follow the same strategy in m. 15 but with more excitement. After achieving a pleasing execution, we can try including the statements of the germ cell, located in the middle staff of the reduction. Each statement of the germ cell has a tendency to accelerate to the subsequent beat, creating an even more urgent motion. In this subphrase, Chopin’s polyphonic texture allows the entrances of the germ cell to occur with the accented third sixteenth of the upper neighbor cell. To articulate this gesture, we can add a crescendo/decrescendo swell on each occurrence of the upper neighbor cell in mm. 14-15, replicating Chopin’s markings from mm. 2-3 (see Example 4.37).

¹⁷⁰ Schenker (1935, title page).
Example 4.37: Chopin, Etude: motivic cells used in the second *rythme* of the consequent phrase, mm. 14-17

Example 4.38: Chopin, Etude: descending/ascending cell, mm. 17-21

The descending/ascending cell exerts a significant influence upon the irregular rhythmic design of the opening *rythme* (see Example 4.29, e). Although the agogic accents in mm. 1-5

Abbreviations:

UNC = upper neighbor cell
DNC = double neighbor cell
GC = germ cell
underscore the meter, as mentioned earlier, in a broader perspective, the appearance of this specific motive creates an important goal of tonal motion that helps augment the phrase. The tension created by the motive is not released until m. 5, at which point the tonic (m. 5) (for score excerpt, see Example 4.5). In this instance, the cell’s descending motion creates melodic tension, even though it is balanced by subsequent motion in the opposite direction. As Example 4.38 shows, Chopin reverses this dynamic quality of the cell in a descending sequential pattern following the point of climax, drastically changing the design of the melodic contour that precedes it. Within this expanded subphrase, the motive forms a discharge that leads to the closing tonic. Chopin makes use of the descending configuration of the motive to resolve tension and to bring the section to a close. It is no surprise that Chopin uses this underlying structure to create the same continuum of melodic release in the coda. The chromatic implications, in conjunction with the descending gestures, produce a tonal motion that oscillates between stable tonic tones and unstable subdominant tones, creating an impression of distance and final closure (see Example 4.36).

Integrated within the descending/ascending cell is a smaller motivic configuration—a descending leap of a fourth followed by an ascending step, which I label the circular cell (see Example 4.29, f). Its component pitches (g♭⁴—d♯⁴—e♭⁴) resurface at the beginning of the consequent phrase, the g♯ suggesting a superimposed descant. In both occurrences, the cell appears over tonic harmony and progresses to dominant harmony. After the climax of m. 17, a varied version of the circular cell appears over a larger span of music. Example 4.39 illustrates that the parallel motion of the cell is augmented over a dominant six-four harmony that leads to a deceptive progression. While the first two statements of the motive establish 2 (mm. 4 and 9), in this instance, Chopin expands the cell to form a sequential progression that allows the Kopfton to
return to its obligatory register. Notice that the repetition of the cell a third lower in mm. 18-19 embodies the identical contour. In this iteration, the cell functions as part of the surface-level expansion of the section, and its final release of musical tension.

Example 4.39: Chopin, Etude: augmented variation of the circular cell, mm. 17-21

Another motive that incorporates both tension and release is what I refer to as the appoggiatura motive (see Example 4.29, g). It first appears at the point of climax in the opening rythme (m. 3), functioning as a dissonant appoggiatura. In its second appearance (mm. 7-8), the 6-5 motion is prolonged through four beats and sustained over consonant support. In both examples, the motive is used to create the highpoint and goal of resolution of the subphrase, regardless of whether it occurs locally or over broader spans of music. In the B section (mm. 30-31), Chopin transforms the motive to create a linear progression that involves modal inflections, as shown in Example 4.40.

The play of modal inflections in this passage gives the melody much of its character. While the cell shapes and guides the progression, beneath it, we hear a rhythmic organization that is syncopated—the alto and tenor voices enter on the second sixteenth note of each beat. This is the first occurrence of surface level syncopation within the B section. Chopin repeats this identical pattern a step higher in mm. 34-35. Thus, the two shapes that underlie this passage are one of stability, and one of instability. The appoggiatura motive in the melody creates a sense of
solidity with its metrically strong emphasis, while the alto and tenor voices underneath it create a dynamic sense of syncopation. Chopin generates an even more perturbing effect with his use of suspensions on the second beat of each measure. It goes without saying that the challenge for the pianist is to incorporate all three of these features simultaneously.

As mentioned earlier, the 6–5 motion appears in the bass in m. 8 directing contrapuntal energy towards its cadential goal (see Examples 4.25 and 4.26). This appearance of the cell in the bass is elaborated in mm. 43 and 45. Through the chromaticism of the $\flat6$, Chopin intensifies the motion towards the dominant by incorporating linear activity that involves motion below and above the dominant. This subordinate progression is initiated on the second sixteenth note of the beat, again reinforcing the idea of syncopation (see Example 4.34).

In the retransition and the coda, the modally inflected variant cell resurfaces in the bass and is used as a means of expanding both phrases. The retransition uses the cell to intensify the harmonic motion to the dominant (see Example 4.35). The coda, however, extends the cell over a larger span of music, producing a strong tendency to move toward and establish the tonic, though it evades an authentic cadence (see Example 4.41).
Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to evaluate the underlying structure and features of this Etude in order to shape an expressive and convincing interpretation. The analysis strongly suggests that the basis of a performance conception of the Etude should be rooted in an understanding of the various elements that operate in it—specifically syncopation, *legato* melody, and polyphony.

Without a doubt, there are difficult decisions that need to be made when interpreting this Etude. Chopin’s changes of tempo marking, for instance, have generated much confusion, allowing for extreme variants and self-indulgence. Performing this Etude at *a tempo* that inhibits continuous momentum works against the syncopated rhythmic shape of the basic cell, which permeates the music at the beat-level, 2-bar level, 5-bar level, and the overall form of the work. Another unifying factor that produces a temporally coherent rendition of this Etude is the status of certain polyphonic lines and hidden evocative countermelodies. Quite often, they dictate and help determine tempo fluctuations in various passages, as I have demonstrated in mm. 6-8, 14-16, and 17-21. The polyphonic voices create melodic contours and shapes, as in the very opening *rythme*, that demand specific physical actions by the performer, in order to create a well-

Example 4.41: Chopin, Etude: chromatically altered resolving cell in coda, mm. 73-77
projected, *legato* melody. While the pervasive syncopated rhythms may suggest a detached touch and less restrained dynamics, the somber and striking melody, however, calls for a continuous assimilation of expressive and animated nuances. Finally, I would claim that an additional responsibility of a performer when interpreting this Etude is to grasp and somehow articulate in performance the remarkably coherent network of motivic relationships that saturate this work. The fragmentation of various motives, and their context in the music’s narrative, is of an obvious importance in creating an expressive performance. As the analysis has demonstrated, an awareness of the Etude’s intricate motives helps integrate a more informed understanding of the Etude’s local and large-scale design, melodic structure, and rhythmic groupings.
CONCLUSION
LUSSY’S ELEMENTS OF EXPRESSIVE PERFORMANCE

Many write on music, few advance by their writing the art, or add anything to the general store of knowledge. Among the few I do not hesitate to rank M[athis] Lussy. By his *Traité de l’expression musicale* he has influenced theory and practice very considerably . . . this influence is sure to spread further and work still more effectively.

Frederick Niecks

Within fourteen years of its first publication, Mathis Lussy’s *Traité de l’expression musicale* appeared in fourteen French editions and was translated into English, German, and Russian. Its influence and significance was immediate, as is evident from numerous positive reviews. Lussy’s theory of expression “is the most extensive exploration to date of the concept of accent.” His theory is innovative because it postulates specific features of musical events to which a performer should respond. Lussy was one of the first music theorists to write about and explore the notion of expressive variables as inherent structural properties of music. According to Lussy, musical structure and musical expression are intrinsically related. In her discussion of recent research on the sources and psychology of expression in performance, Doğantan expounds on Lussy’s innovative contributions, stating:

Historical roots of the recent research on the relation between musical structure and expression in performance go back to Lussy. Before any experimental data on performance variables became available . . . Lussy had already formulated the basic functions of tempo and intensity variations in performance as they relate to the musical structure.

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171 Quoted in Doğantan (1997, 240).


173 Ibid. (298).

Lussy’s basic conjecture in this connection is that expressive performance is dependent on a performer’s conceptual understanding of the musical structure—that is, tonality, meter, and rhythm. For Lussy, expression in performance depends mainly on two devices: fluctuations of dynamic intensity and fluctuations of tempo. The first type involves accentuation and dynamic nuance while the second type relates to the application of *temo rubato*.

Lussy proclaims that a performer must be cognizant of three types of musical events: “metric accents, group boundaries, and pathétique occurrences.”¹⁷⁵ In Lussy’s theory, accentuation defines the level of dynamic intensity that marks pivotal points in phrases and shapes the beginning and ending of rhythmic groups. In this context, accentuations, for Lussy, do not always indicate an increase in volume or stress. On the contrary, a passage can be rendered expressive by a decrease of intensity in relation to its surrounding counterparts, as demonstrated in the final refrain of Chopin’s Mazurka Op. 7, no. 2 and in his Prelude Op. 28, no. 17 (see Chapters 2 and 3).

Metric accentuation, according to Lussy, always involves stress. However, Lussy contends that although metric accents are strong in theory, a performer will always have a choice on the degree to which the metric structure needs to be emphasized. This notion was explored in Chapter 1 with my analysis of Chopin’s Prelude Op. 28, no. 7: at deeper levels, the metric accent directs the tonal motion, with odd-numbered measures carrying metrical and hypermetrical stress, because they initiate the larger groups of measures. On the surface level, however, the climactic event of m. 12 dictated the Prelude’s dramatic expression because of its syncopated relation to the metric structure. This analytical discernment allows a performer to consider at least two possible choices: (1) to either bring out Cone’s structural downbeat (a deeper-level

metrical accent near the end of the composition); or (2) to emphasize the poignant moment in m. 12 as a critical articulation that directs the remainder of the work’s energy. These observations underscore different aspects of the musical structure, each of which has its own implications for expressive performance.

To assist a performer in understanding how to shape a phrase in a given passage, Lussy emphasizes the significance of grouping. His basic criteria for expressive shaping of rhythmic groupings revolve around the principle of tonal attractions. For Lussy, the first pitch of a rhythmic unit often carries stress. This is simply to clarify the beginnings of rhythmic units. However, not all rhythmic units are beginning-accented, as confirmed in my analysis of the Mazurka Op. 7 No. 2 (see Chapter 2). Here, I demonstrated that the agogic accents in the even-numbered measures propel the music forward, overriding the effect of the beginning-accented groupings. Although the majority of the Mazurka’s incises involved agogic accents—producing end-accented groupings—there were several exceptions that allowed for performative choices on whether or not to create forward impulse, including the downbeats of m. 21 and m. 25.

The performance of end-accented groupings, in Lussy’s theory, is even more flexible. According to Lussy, the choice to accentuate the final pitch of a rhythmic grouping is determined by its tonal and rhythmical implications. However, as Doğantan explains, “Lussy leaves the judgment of the degree to which the final note of a group is ‘desired’ to the intuitive discernment of the performer.”

Using this hypothesis, I explored and articulated various choices concerning end-accented units throughout my analyses. For instance, in the Prelude no. 17, I observed that its melodic rhythm creates an accentual pattern in which stresses often occur on the even-numbered measures, creating a sense of syncopation within its hypermetrical structure (see

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Chapter 3). I claimed that a performer’s chief responsibility in interpreting this work is in considering alternative ways of pacing the 2-bar *incises* and the 4-bar hypermeasures within each refrain, allowing for various degrees of dynamic and temporal fluctuation.

Above all, the primary focal point of Lussy’s theory is in his belief that rhythmical and tonal irregularities lie at the heart of expressive performance. If anything unexpected occurs in the metric, rhythmic, and tonal structure of a work, then it will produce an *accent pathétique*—a stress strong enough to override all other criteria. At the metric level, the main source of irregularity is syncopation. In Lussy’s theory, as Doğantan explains, “The stress that the performer employs in delivering syncopation is the manifestation of his inner struggle to retain the regularity of metric accents against this destructive force.”

In my analysis of Chopin’s Etude in E Major, Op. 10 No. 3, I argued that the syncopation at the beat level becomes an intrinsic and essential feature of its musical structure, guiding a performer’s rhythmic conception (see Chapter 4). The key in rendering a lively interpretation of this work, in my view, is realizing the expressive potential in Chopin’s irregular groupings, from the smallest level to its largest level, while also effectively rendering the lovely *legato* melody and giving appropriate attention to each strand of Chopin’s astonishingly rich polyphonic texture.

Irregularities of any sort, e.g. syncopations, impact critical choices a performer will need to make concerning dynamic nuances and tempo variations. According to Lussy, tempo fluctuations in performance serve two ends: “they render the internal dynamics of rhythmic groups comprehensible, and convey their expressive content to the listener.”

Experiencing the internal dynamics of rhythmic groups, Lussy believes, is the equivalent of experiencing bodily

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178 Ibid. (126).
movement. For Lussy, an ascending melody “is similar to the psychological experience that accompanies the physical act of climbing,”\(^{179}\) As Lussy suggests, such a musical action demands both a crescendo and accelerando. This idea inspired my analyses in the two sequential episodes in Chopin’s Prelude no. 17 (see Chapter 3). The rising melodic lines are transferred up an octave in both passages followed by a reversal of melodic contour. For Lussy, such passages need to integrate the opposite counteraction (that is, a slowing down of forces) to achieve a balanced proportion. In m. 51, the melody begins to descend from b\(^5\), and Chopin’s diminuendo marking confirms a tapering off of energy. The fifth-related progression, however, produces a gravitational pull that defies the impulse toward a ritardando. As my analysis indicated, such passages allow a performer to choose between shaping the unit in a way that conforms to its melodic contour, or in a way that focuses on its harmonic implications. Either choice can result in clear, expressive interpretations.

Some readers may be skeptical about the validity of such tempo fluctuations. I would ask them to consider the following statements. The first is by Chopin’s pupil Karol Mikuli in Aleksander Michałowski’s ‘Jak grał Fryderyk Szopen?’ [How Did Chopin Play?] (1932).

Chopin was far from being a partisan to metric rigor and frequently used rubato in his playing, accelerating or slowing down this or that theme. But Chopin’s rubato possessed an unshakable emotional logic. It always justified itself by a strengthening or weakening of the melodic line, by harmonic details, by the figurative structure. It was fluid, natural; it never degenerated into exaggeration or affectation.\(^{180}\)

A second statement is by Wilhelm von Lenz, among the privileged firsthand witnesses to Chopin’s playing.

\(^{179}\) Doğantan (2002, 128).

\(^{180}\) As quoted in Eigeldinger (1986, 50).
What characterized Chopin’s playing was his rubato, in which the totality of the rhythm was constantly respected. ‘The left hand,’ I often heard him say, ‘is the choirmaster [Kapellmeister]: it mustn’t relent or bend. It’s a clock. Do with the right hand what you want and can.’ He would say, ‘A piece lasts for, say, five minutes, only in that it occupies this time for its overall performance; internal details [of pace within the piece] are another matter. And there you have rubato.’

It is also worth mentioning Zbigniew Skowron’s description of Chopin’s rubato as quoted in his 2004 article “Creating a Legend or Reporting the Facts? Chopin as a Performer in the Biographical Accounts of F. Liszt, M.A. Szulc, and F. Niecks.”

Charles Hallé . . . told [Frederick] Niecks that when he ‘first heard him [Chopin] play his compositions he could not imagine how what he heard was represented by musical signs. At the same time, he remarked that Chopin’s tempo rubato was sometimes mistaken for the removal or shifting of the accent.

Ultimately, a performance of Chopin’s music must be imbued with an improvisational character. This is apparent from the very fact that Chopin “never played his works twice with the same expression . . . he could have played the same piece twenty times in succession, and you would still listen with equal fascination.” Lastly, Kazimierz Morski suggests that Chopin abandoned the use of metronome indications for his compositions after 1836 in order to reinforce this improvisatory notion by allowing “greater freedom in the individual sensibilities of performers.”

Greater freedom in music involves the idea of choice and expressive performance necessitates the making of decisions. This is reflected in Lussy’s performance rules. His methodological approach is the outcome of intuitive knowledge from his lifetime experience of

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181 As quoted in Eigeldinger (1986, 50).
183 As quoted in Eigeldinger (1986, 55).
being an accomplished musician, teacher, and theorist. While Lussy formulated explicit rules to promote musical expression, the greatest significance of his work, I believe, is its implication that the source of all expression in performance lies in the performer’s ability to make choices about the functions of particular musical features and the means of projecting them. Edward T. Cone confirmed this belief when he said that performers “must . . . decide what is important and make that as clear as possible, even at the expense of other aspects of the work.”

Although Lussy’s theory teaches us to take note of the many elusive and paradoxical passages, marking them for attention and suggesting alternative ways of realizing them, he did not imply that there might be more than one way to express a piece of music. On the contrary, Lussy believed that performances of the same piece should not have significant differences. For Lussy, it is the performer’s responsibility to identify the most exciting passages, and then integrate and control them in real time so that they can be accurately conveyed. But if this process is as constricted as Lussy suggests, one must wonder—why are there so many interpretative differences between performances of Chopin’s compositions? These artistic differences, lead one to believe that there must be more than one way to successfully create an expressive performance. Perhaps Lussy’s greatest contribution was not in his confidence of finding that one “correct” interpretation, but rather in his ability to make his readers aware of the importance of understanding the intricate details of a musical score, and his formulation of rules on how to examine and to select the varying nuances to be realized in performance.

Alfred Brendel expressed a similar notion when he said, “to understand the composers’ intentions means to translate them into one’s own understanding.”186 If this is true, then

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185 Cone (1968, 34).

186 Brendel (1976, 25).
ambiguous passages—like the hypermetric reversal that marks a critical point of tension in the Prelude No. 7 (m. 12); or the Mazurka's subdominant arrival at the restatement of the principal theme (m. 25); or the subtle hypermetrical deviations found in the two sequential episodes of Chopin's Prelude No. 17; or the prevailing significance of syncopation in the Etude—will always invite interpretive license, because “one’s own understanding” invites performers to add their own personality and thoughts to the work. Lussy's theory helps us to better understand those many provocative surprises, encouraging a thorough examination of the score and taking note of their special treatment. Nevertheless, an objective comparison of different interpretations demonstrates that numerous renditions of the same piece are not the result of a lack of understanding, as Lussy would have us believe, but rather the result of different personalities producing various interpretations, all of which, I believe, are worthy in their own ways.
WORKS CITED


**Recordings Cited**


VITA

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